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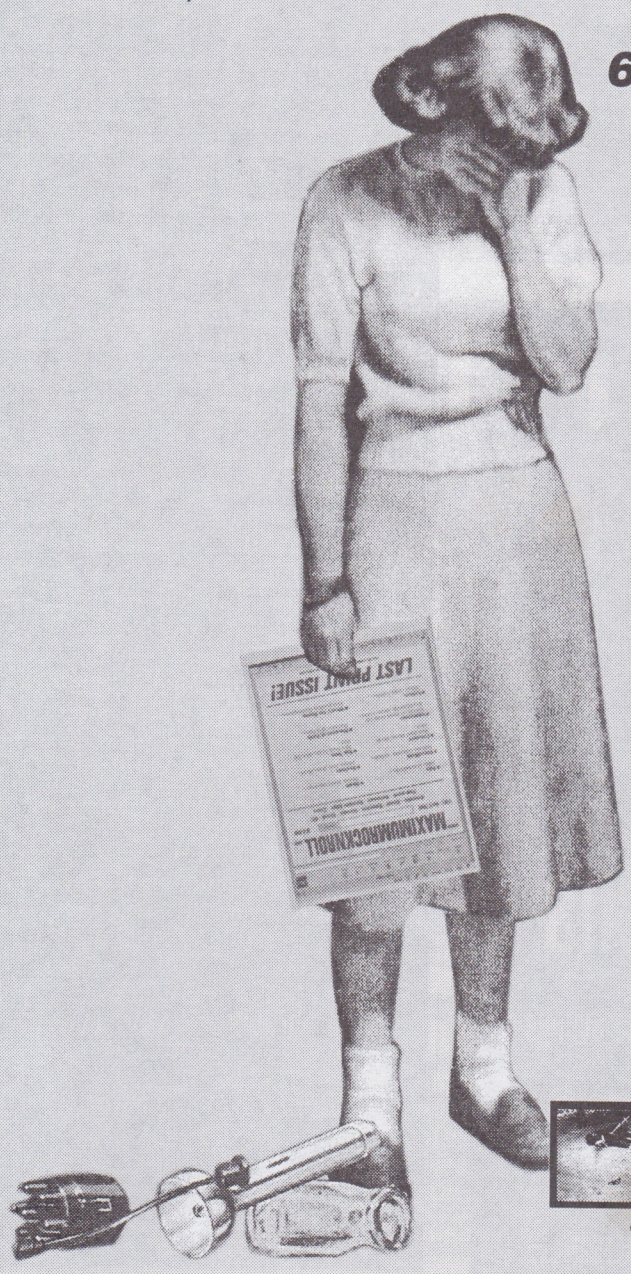
* SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN!

Life is nothing without freedom of choice. In that spirit, we're letting you choose the caption for the picture below.

I'm sad because:

1) Jackers told me to "eat shit vomit"
2) Lefty's not a Leninist anymore!
3) I can't get this black grime off my fingers!
4) Anne R. Key said I was pregnant and my boyfriend's gonna kill me!

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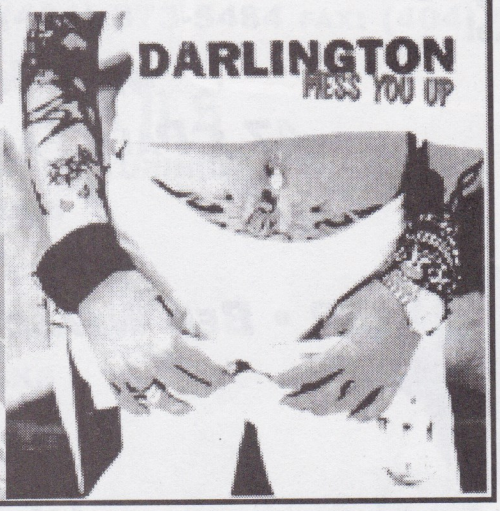
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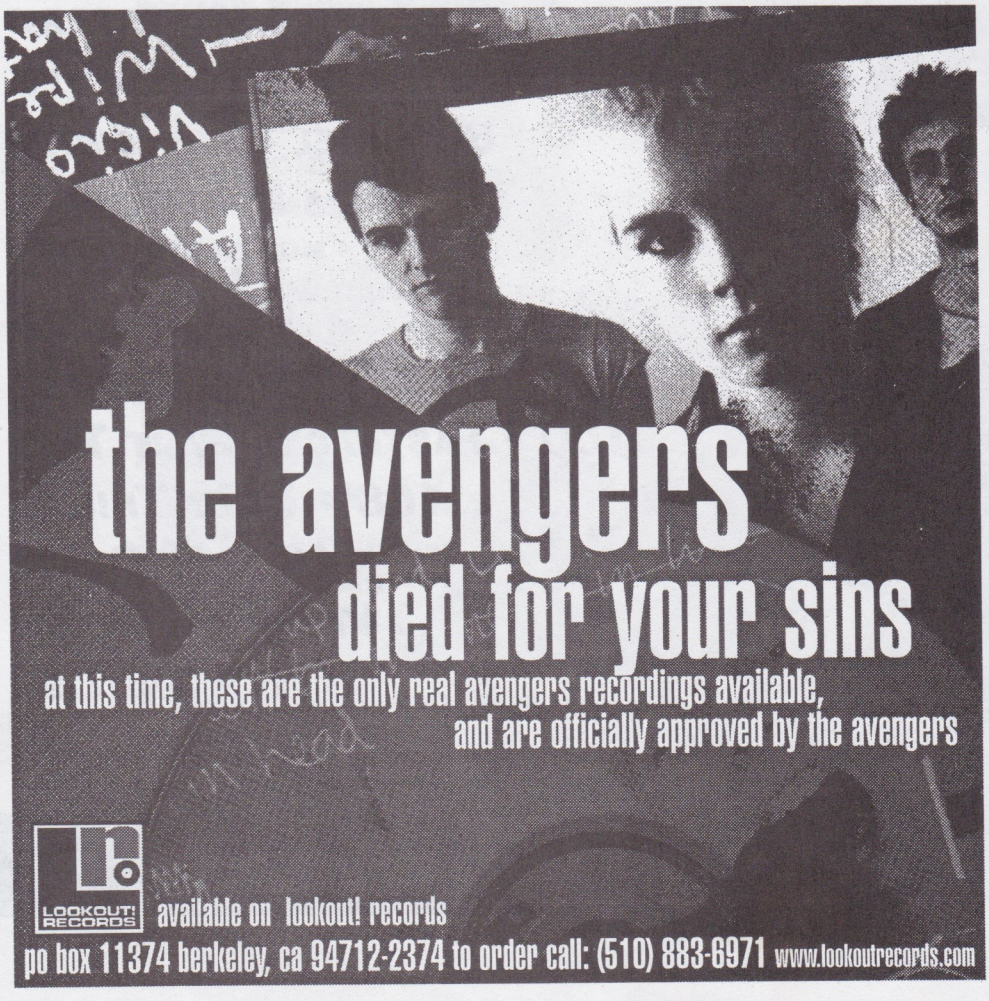
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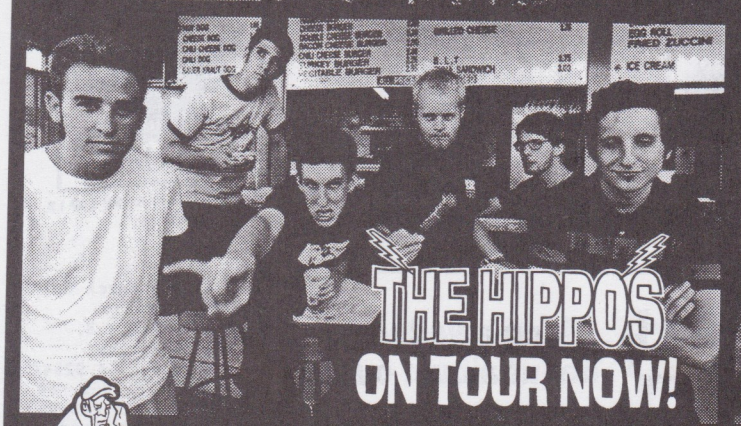
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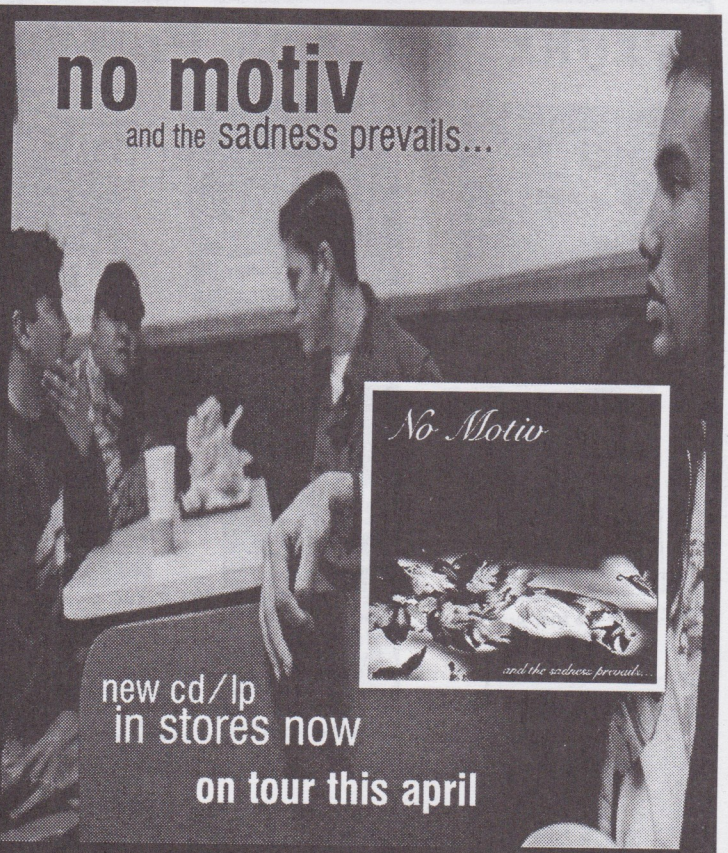
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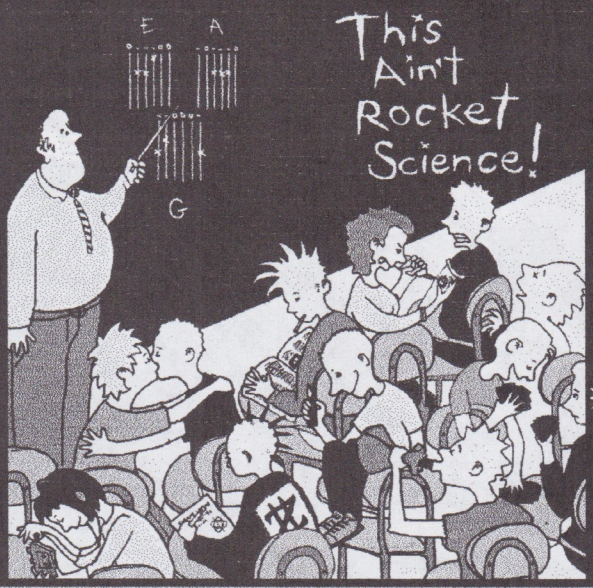


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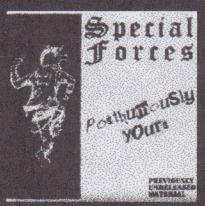


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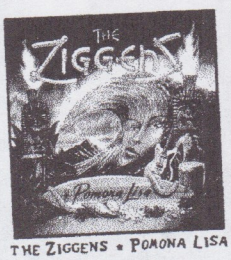
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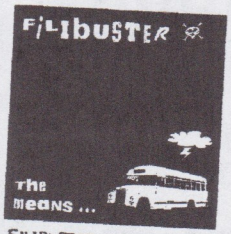


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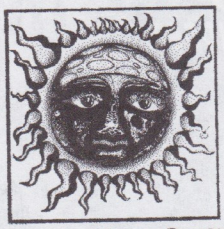
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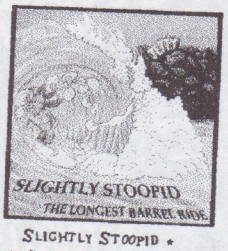
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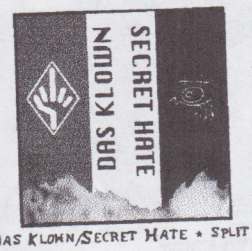
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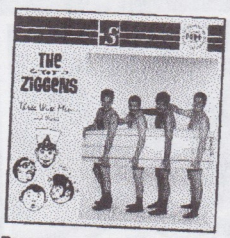
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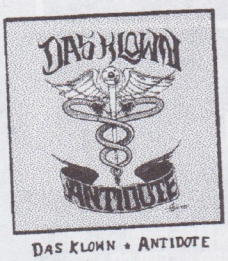
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Hey! Even *MRR* Loves Us!

Dear Jeff Bale and *Hit List*,

Congratulations on your first issue. What Tim might have thought of it is up for debate, but as a representative of those still on the planet, I'm excited about *Hitlist's* arrival for several reasons. In this, I don't purport to speak for any other *MRR* folks (who are notorious, as you know, for having their own pesky opinions about things). According to your mission statement (and emphasized by your editorial style), *Hitlist* will espouse an educated approach toward topics of interest. I agree that critical thinking is overdue in the underground music playground, where pale, vague, and misconceived "information" has been rampantly peddled too cheap for too long. The quest for an open exchange of ideas is also admirable, though how "open" it will be remains to be seen. Your encyclopedic knowledge of music challenges vinyl-hoarding slobs everywhere, but, (and this is unusual) seems to be tempered with a sense of the insufficiency of this type of obsession. In other words, rock n roll may stir the soul, but it won't bring home the intellectual bacon. I'm glad someone is willing to sacrifice his laboratory to this experiment.

In regards to your goals: I'm skeptical when the "maximum freedom of expression," like any other governing concept, becomes infused with a limitless amount of power, able to justify everything. There are, I believe, phenomena which rival the threat of intellectual numbness as major blights on the species. The worship of extremism and shock value at all costs is a stunted approach, and can be ritualized into a "sacred cow" as easily as any other idea. I don't think it's ever wise to ignore history, and I admire those people who have limited, in intelligent ways, how far they will go in the name of free expression. An example of this is the (still incomplete, unfortunately) banishment of Nazi-sympathizers from the punk scene. The "open exchange of ideas," in the form of support for businesses like Resistance Records, is not, in my opinion, an example of "intelligence, creativity, imagination, literacy," nor, certainly, of humor. While I regretfully accept that all sorts of crazy assholes are going to be driving on the roads, I'm sure as hell not going to give them the keys to my car. As for the content, It goes without saying that your credentialed contributors (ah! to sup at the table of such noble, famous men!) can't feed off of their bitterness toward *MRR* forever, though I'm sure at least one of them will try. I'll be interested to see what personality, beyond this, *Hitlist* forges for itself in the future. You've put yourself in a curious position, by not allowing "censorship" of ideas in your own publication, while recruiting the nastiest bunch of old fucks you can find to fill its pages. I think Ben Weasel has the potential to be usefully critical, as well as persistently negative. Rev. Norb has made me laugh out loud, though often his ugly thoughtlessness drowns his sense of humor, and then he just sucks. Tesco Vee and Mel Cheplowitz, or is that President Cheplowitz? aren't going to get by on (respectively) bathroom humor and venom alone — it just isn't that interesting.

On a different note, it's reassuring to see that you are capable, without being unnecessarily malicious, of articulating the difference in scope between our publications. We are a different animal, with distinct and passionate intentions, including, as you say, to support the international punk community. What we have in common—*Hitlist*, like *MRR* (or any publication), has a structure potentially awkward in its rigidity. For example, your record review section has a spot for a photograph of every sleeve, so you have some empty black boxes when things don't go as planned. This indicates things must change, sometimes, because they simply don't work out right. What you've dedicated to precision in mechanical and esthetic ways, *MRR* has done by making, and re-making, day-to-day ethical decisions — that's a part of our character which doesn't appear in your agenda, and doesn't have to. The fact that this evolving ideology has been taken seriously by the punk community is not an indication of our lust for the Arbitration of Punk — it means that our readers are concerned with our stance. As for stodginess and paternalism, these are most effectively practiced by stodgy old men. There aren't too many of those hanging around here anymore (I wonder where they've all gotten off to?).

While I don't promote censorship, I don't agree that the principle of free expression deserves the deified status you afford it. Nonetheless, I welcome your "feisty new alternative" and wish you the best of luck keeping your feet on the ground, and generating lucid, entertaining, and relevant ideas.

Arwen Curry
co-coordinator, *Maximumrocknroll*
arwenc@mindspring.com

Dear Arwen:

Thanks for the "congratulations" and "good luck" wishes, however backhanded they may be. Critical thinking is indeed long overdue in the underground music press, and one can only hope that our example will be followed by others, regardless of what their musical tastes and politics happen to be. I won't believe it until I actually see it, however. As you suggest, my obsessive love for rock 'n' roll—tremendous as it is—is alone insufficient to satisfy my intellectual curiosity, which is why *HL* intends to publish interesting articles on all sorts of interesting cultural, social, and musical topics. Yet for others the resultant "soul-stirring" may well be enough, and that's fine by me.

In your letter you raise a couple of issues which I feel require some response. The first, not surprisingly, is the matter of freedom of expression. While I'm not accustomed to "deifying" things, if anything at all is worthy of such total and indivisible support, it is the freedom of individuals—irrespective of their social standing, economic position, race, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation—to believe in and express whatever social and political views they want to, no matter how unconventional or "offensive" they may be to others. What, pray tell, could be more fundamental to any truly emancipatory social or political program than freedom of thought and expression? How could any program abridging such fundamental freedoms possibly contribute, either in the short or the long run, to human emancipation? When you or anyone else can provide a satisfactory answer to these fundamental questions, perhaps I'll stop worshipping at the altar of free speech. Until then, my attitude is not going to change one iota. Moreover, although you claim to be opposed to censorship, your own words belie your claim. You admit to admiring "those people who have limited, in intelligent ways, how far they will go in the name of free expression", a statement that can only mean that you favor some form of "self-censorship". If one wished to be uncharitable, one might suggest that this is because if people were willing to censor themselves, you (and others who feel as you do) would not eventually be forced to try and censor them yourself once they transgressed the boundaries of "acceptability". How convenient. More telling still is your remark about how "curious" it is that our magazine has an anti-censorship policy after I've gone out of my way to recruit belligerent people with strong, controversial opinions (in your words, the "nastiest old fucks"—more on this later—I can find). You seem to be implying that it would be OK for *Hit List* to have an anti-censorship stance if only we recruited writers who were sufficiently "sensitive" and willingly refrained from expressing provocative, controversial, or "offensive" views. But wouldn't that defeat the whole purpose?

As for your complaints about my philosophical support for not discriminating against advertisers—at least insofar as they are advertising something that might be of interest to underground music afficionados—this raises a host of complex and sensitive issues that will be discussed at length in future issues of *Hit List*. But I couldn't help but note that your analogy between allowing people to advertise in my magazine and turning over the keys to my car to them is a false one. Turning over the keys to my car to someone would be analogous to turning over editorial control of my magazine to them, and I can assure you that I will not be turning the editorial control of *Hit List* over to anyone else, least of all the people from Resistance Records or Profane Existence. A more apt analogy is that I'm

willing to give travelling salesmen a ride in my car in exchange for a quarter, irrespective of their social and political views. In that sense I'm no different than a bus driver. Perhaps you think that bus drivers, public or private, should also engage in political "vetting" before allowing paying customers to take a seat.

In any case, your concerns in this regard are more than a little hypocritical, since *MRR* has not only allowed reprehensible left-wing authoritarians to advertise in its pages, but has recently even turned over portions of its editorial content to such people. I found it rather ironic when, a few pages after Lefty Hooligan wrote a column containing severe (and entirely justified) criticisms of Leninist vanguards, *MRR* included yet another hyperbolic propaganda leaflet (in the absurdly misnamed *MRR* "news" section) from the International Action Center, which is essentially a front group for the Worker's World Party, a sectarian ultra-Leninist wannabe vanguard party that supports (among other odious regimes and causes) the dictatorial Stalinist regime in North Korea. In another recent issue, MRR actually printed a tendentious guest column on the Mumia Abu-Jamal case by C. Clark Kissinger of the Refuse and Resist organization, which is little more than a front group controlled by activists from the Revolutionary Communist Party, another lunatic Leninist vanguard party which not only uncritically supported the most murderous forms of Maoism in China, but also the Pol Pot regime in Cambodia and the Peruvian terrorist group Sendero Luminoso. (On top of that, the RCP is a blatantly homophobic organization.) I guess these are simply further displays of *MRR's* oft-proclaimed concerns about oppression, injustice, and exploitation—except, of course, when they are advocated, initiated, and/or carried out by leftists and "people of color". Returning to your automobile analogy, although *Hit List* has yet to give a single "ride" to authoritarians of any stripe (by allowing them to advertise), in *MRR* such people are not only allowed to hitch a ride in the back seat, but actually to sit in the front seat and occasionally give directions to the driver.

I also feel compelled to comment on the barely-disguised displays of "sexism" and "ageism" in your letter, something you'd be the first to whine about if they were directed in your direction. First, you claim that I have recruited "the nastiest old fucks I could find", when "the nastiest fucks I could find"—without a reference to their age—would have been sufficient. Then you state that "stodginess and paternalism...are most effectively practiced by stodgy old men", by inference people like myself, who have apparently all ended up writing for *HL*. Aside from providing no evidence whatsoever for this ridiculous assertion—in my experience, no one is more stodgy than humorless self-styled radicals, whatever their gender or age—it reflects a degree of ingratitude that is frankly astonishing. Let me be more explicit so that there is no possibility of misunderstanding my meaning here. Virtually everyone who is (or will be) writing columns in *HL* has played a significant role in actually helping to create, develop, and sustain the very rock 'n' roll counterculture that you and the other *MRR* coordinators and shitworkers, years if not decades later, voluntarily chose to associate yourselves with. If it wasn't for us and dozens of other creative, dedicated, pioneering, and opinionated eccentrics, i.e., the "nasty old fucks" who actually broke the paths that you and thousands of other latecomers have since followed, "punk" as you now know it would not even exist. That fact alone should elicit a certain amount of respect, even in a counterculture that routinely rebels against its own elders. Furthermore, to the extent that my role in the creation and early development of *MRR* has enabled you and Jacqueline to avoid having to earn a living like everybody else, you should be thanking me, not to mention your lucky stars. If nothing else, I think I've earned the right to raise substantive concerns about *MRR's* current direction and actions. Whether you like it or not, I intend to do just that in the pages of *HL*, especially when I witness such egregious abuses of power.

This brings me to my penultimate point. I was frankly flabbergasted by your condescending remark concerning the "day-to-day ethical decisions" that are allegedly part of *MRR's* "character" but which, according to you, don't "appear in [our] agenda." As it happens, I am an extremely moral and ethical person, so much so that I've repeatedly sacrificed a brilliant and promising career on the altar of my principles. You have no real basis for judgement, since we hardly know each other, but it is certainly no secret to those who know me well. My ethical values are clearly (and mercifully) different than yours, but to suggest that I lack them is not only absurd but gratuitously insulting. As for *MRR's* vaunted ethics, it would be a simple matter for me to point out a host of ethical contradictions, not to mention lapses and abuses, that have occurred over the years, but I'll confine myself to mentioning a couple that have taken place within the past month or so.

Perhaps *MRR's* current ethics are best reflected in the satirical "Mel Chumpwitz" column in the "April fools" issue, wherein you resort to "revealing"—or, more accurately, inventing—private details about his mental condition, medication, and sources of income. I didn't expect you to actually respond to the substantive issues Mel raised in his *Hit List* column by actually trying to rebut them, since after attacking Man's Ruin you were unwilling (and obviously unable) to respond to the issues raised by Frank Kozik and Jami Wolf, and in any case there are no excuses for the abusive way in which you gave Mel his walking papers. But in response you might at least have provided your own version of the events that led to his firing. Even if you had just wanted to be malicious—which was obviously the case—it would have been perfectly fine if 1) you had characterized Mel as a stubborn SOB who can be exceptionally difficult to work with, something that is actually true, or otherwise had expressed severely negative views about him that had some relevance to the dispute; or if 2) you had emulated his peculiar writing style and carried it to absurd lengths; or if 3) you had satirized and exaggerated his views about particular subjects in order to make him look ridiculous. I would be the last person to suggest that you don't have the right to express whatever opinions you want to (other than making slanderous and libelous statements), or even that you don't have the right to do so in the most aggressive, obnoxious, and offensive manner imaginable. But I myself have never made such vituperative personal attacks on anyone in print, and in my opinion focussing exclusively on intimate (real or imagined) personal details about someone's life that have no real relevance to anything is not a sign of morality, but childishness. I'm sure that Tim felt the same way about this. He occasionally engaged in rancorous and unjustified personal attacks on people, but he always did so for what he considered to be substantive "political" reasons—almost invariably when he felt, rightly or wrongly, that they were exploiting or ripping off the punk scene—and rarely (if ever) stooped to the level of talking about someone's medication. (This clearly changed somewhat after the appearance of "Anne R.Key's" inane gossip column, whose publication was certainly one of the worst ideas Tim ever came up or went along with.) One can only imagine the howls that would be emanating from *MRR* HQ if Mel had published phony columns purportedly written by Jacqueline and you that "revealed" that Jakkers used various medications to treat her genital warts, or that you loved to take it up the poop shoot while wearing diapers. Even in a satirical context, such remarks would rightly raise eyebrows.

Another probable recent example of *MRR's* ethics is that someone over on Grove Street appears to have instructed volunteer staffers at Epicenter not to stock *Hit List* and *Shredding Paper.* What else could explain the fact that neither of these two zines is available in an underground "punk rock" store in the very city where they are published, especially given the fact that Epicenter carries large numbers of other DIY punkzines. Perhaps this is merely a coincidence or an accident, but I sense

MRR's fine ethics at work behind the scenes. In short, if I were you I wouldn't be boasting about *MRR's* noble "day-to-day ethical decisions", at least not until some of thsoe decisions turn out to be the right ones. Too many people have been victimized by *MRR's* ethical lapses over the years to make such a boast believable. To put it bluntly, some of *MRR's* coordinators and writers have a long way to go before their ethics will be worthy of approval, much less emulation.

Finally, I had to laugh when you claimed that *MRR's* "evolving [political] ideology is taken seriously by the punk community". I don't know a single person who takes *MRR's* political views seriously (although I'll grant you that many punks have been browbeaten into feigning PC attitudes because they're afraid of *MRR's* power). Why, pray tell, should they? *MRR's* politics are utterly sophomoric, being confined to the endless and uncritical repetition of three simpleminded ideas: 1) capitalism is evil, 2) every action undertaken by the U.S. in foreign affairs is imperialistic and immoral, and 3) everyone who doesn't support an extreme left-wing social agenda is "racist, sexist, and homophobic", if not a "Nazi". Duh! This is equivalent in its level of sophistication to the satirical VANDALS' record title, "Hitler Bad, Vandals Good". Other than Lefty Hooligan (who endlessly recycles sterile Marxist political debates that were already irrelevant by the 1930s, if not earlier) and ex-PE writer Felix Havoc—here it should be recalled that Dave Emory's "columns" are verbatim versions of his radio broadcasts—no one currently writing for *MRR* gives any indication that they have any familiarity whatsoever with political theory, much less the basic facts of political history. Thus the only people who could possibly find MRR's political views worthy of serious consideration are 1) masses of naive but alienated 16-year old "Joe Schmoes from Kokomo" and 2) that pathetic cadre of "professional" activist losers who uncritically support every "progressive" (anti-American and anti-Western) cause. Having learned nothing at all from the disastrous historical consequences of the ideas they mindlessly parrot, these latter characters are comparable to members of the Flat Earth Society and "creationists" in their abject refusal to face reality. This, sadly, is the extent of *MRR's* remaining political "constituency".

On a more positive note, *MRR's* current coordinators and shitworkers now have the potential to alter this sad state of affairs and deal with difficult and controversial matters in a more intelligent, rational, and fair-minded fashion. No one would be happier than I would to observe a dramatic improvement in the quality of *MRR,* and I sincerely hope that you are up to the task. I won't be holding my breath until this miraculous transformation takes place, however. If things go on as they are now, and if Tim's legacy continues to be besmirched by ill-advised choices on the part of the current directorate, I would prefer to see *MRR* cease publication altogether. Indeed, such a fate is probably inevitable unless things change for the better.

— *Jeff Bale*

A Note on Design Versus Ethics

Arwen/*MRR*

Your comment "What you've dedicated to precision in mechanical and esthetic ways, *MRR* has done by making, and re-making, day-to-day ethical decisions — that's a part of our character which doesn't appear in your agenda, and doesn't have to," is an interesting one, and as art director, I feel it isn't entirely fair. Yes, it's true that *MRR* and *Hit List* have a very different feel as far as design goes. But your implied assertion that the reasoning behind it is that *MRR* is "ethical" while by default, *Hit List* isn't ethical, illustrates Jeff's point in the last issue that *MRR* strives to be the arbiter of punkitude.

When I decided to take on the responsibility of designing and laying out *Hit List,* I took a hard look at both punk and non-punk magazines, and to be honest, especially *MRR.* To be fair, I'm a huge fan of David Carson, sort of the inventor of the piece deserves its own design school of thought. His work with *Transworld Skateboarding* and *Ray Gun* definitely influenced the way I view design. Yeah, admittedly, *Ray Gun's* content has always kind of sucked, but the design is fucking amazing. The unfortunate downside about that style is that you need brilliant designers to pull it off. Again, in all fairness, I have seen some spreads in *Maximum* that knocked me out with their design, most recently the piece on Thee Headcoatees in issue 182.

I understand the situation you're in. You've got a collection of "shitworkers" who lay out your pieces, and you offer them creative freedom in exchange for their hard work. Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. That's part of the flexible structure of *MRR.* The problem I have with your argument about our differences in design choices is that you seem to equate "flexible" with "ethical." From what I've seen lately in *MRR,* your ethics seem more than a little flexible—most recently the completely moronic, poorly written and downright low attack on Mel Cheplowitz in the April Fool's issue. It seems to me that if that piece is indicatative of your time spent on ethics, you must be pissing away precious weeks you could be using to come up with a better design for the columns section.

Brett Mathews, in the last year, has become one of my best friends and probably the person I spend the most time with outside of my day job. I know him to be a fair person, and while he and I definitely disagree on occasion, I respect him and the way he works. He loves punk rock as much as I or Jeff do. Although I've only known Jeff for about five or six months, I've definitely come to like and respect him and his achievements. And although at times, his above response may sound like "I Ám The Almighty Bale," in the time I've known him, he has proven everything he says about himself above to be true. Again, Jeff and I don't always agree — hell, I almost quit the magazine over the design of the first issue. I don't want to be a part of something that sucks; something I don't believe in, and I especially don't want to put my time and energy into designing something I think is ugly. Luckily, Jeff and I were finally able to reach some common ground on how we felt the magazine should look (although I don't think he'll ever quite realize the true greatness that was Cringer), and I'm pretty happy with the way it's coming along. But to imply that because I fucking worked my ass off to come up with a look for Hit List, that I'm not concerned with ethics is an absolute crock of shit.

How many fucking records, ads or posters have I designed for little or no money because the parties involved couldn't afford it but I believed in them as people and believed in their projects? Why did I spend so many hours giving away work to AK Press when I could have been selling that time to ad agencies? Why did I agree to design the first few issues of *Hit List* for no money? Because I like the individuals involved, I respect them as people, and I definitely respect what they're doing. I spend ten hours a day working at a newspaper and then come home and design records and *Hit List.* During college I spent a lot of time volunteering for AK. I'm not saying this makes me better than any other designer—or even someone like Winni Wintermeyer who makes a living designing punk reords. All I'm saying is that I'm trying to use my design skills to make some kind of a difference in this world.

Ethics are a sticky issue; to lead an ethical life, one must continually evaluate the pluses and minuses of his or her actions. Arbitrarily hiding behind black and white applications of a pseudo-agenda does not an ethical individual make.

Constantly questioning your actions and the consequences thereof; learning from actions judged unwise; taking individuals and organizations on a case by case basis is something that requires a little more work than saying "Amerika bad, China good." Listen, I don't like everything that goes on in this country or a lot of the actions of our pals in the G7. Frankly I think a lot of it sucks, but fucking shit, we have an oppor-

tunity to change things. Hell, theoretically, we're invited to change things (how much that really means in the American business-driven, media-indoctrinated climate is up for debate, yet the invitation remains), but we have to start with ourselves. We have to start considering our actions, not hiding behind a party line. More often than not, it means treading over gray areas and swimming in murky waters. To be honest, I think the Resistance Records crowd are a bunch of idiotic, misguided numbskulls. But hell, one dollar, one vote, right? By taking their money (not they've offered it to us yet), we can put out another issue of thought-provoking commentary. Hopefully they're funding their own demise...or better yet, maybe they'll see a well reasoned article that changes the way they think rather than some pedantic leftist broadside that merely lambasts them or encourages them to "eat shit vomit."

In all honesty, I'm not opposed at all to *Maximumrocknroll,* 924 Gilman Street, or Epicenter. Frankly, I'm glad that there are people who believe in this scene enough to freely give of their time to foster growth within it. Lord knows we can't all be Fat Mike or Brett Gurewitz (and I'm not necessarily implying that Mike and Brett haven't given back to the community, I'm just saying that they've been fortunate enough to make a very comfortable living putting out punk records). In Dave's Utopia, we wouldn't need a sign at Gilman telling us that if we're homophobes or racists we couldn't come in or play a show, because everyone would be over that sort of idiotic pettiness. And I think *Maximumrocknroll* has done a lot of good putting together a punk infrastructure that has weathered the test of time. Above, Jeff suggests that *MRR* cease publication (under certain circumstances). I disagree. Punk needs *MRR.* What punk doesn't need is a bunch of petty idiocy run in a magazine under the auspices of some apparently clearly defined but nebulously adhered-to agenda. I respect the communal aspects of *MRR,* the scene reports, the vast review section and the magazine's history as a valuable contributor to what I feel is in general the most interesting, energizing and intelligent scene in contemporary popular music. What I don't appreciate are immature, childish attacks on people due to some animosity that is primarily of a personal nature by a bunch of dimbulbs trying to out-Yo Tim, the seeming insistence that DIY has to look or sound like shit, and the assertion that (most recently in Jaqueline's rebuttal to Frank Kozik's reply to one of her columns) *MRR* can judge how a person runs his or her business without examining what the magazine itself has become.

To some extent, yes content is more important than packaging, yet how something is packaged can ultimately affect how the content is viewed. I wanted *Hit List* to have a solid, bold uniform look that didn't really look like anything else in the punk community. I looked at how the magazine was going to be put together, taking into consideration cost and the resources we had available to us, not to mention our cadre of writers and Jeff and Brett's ideas on how they wanted the magazine to look, as well as John Yates' logo which was created before I assumed the responsibilities of art director. What you hold in your hands is the best way I could meet those criteria in the time I had to create the magazine. It doesn't mean that having a full time art director isn't ethical. It simply means we wanted packaging that stood up to the content, as opposed to intelligent writing presented in an amateurish manner.

In closing, I'd like to reiterate something that Jeff said in the first issue: *Hit List* is not meant to supplant *MRR.* We are not an anti-*MRR* publication, but as we are part of the punk community and many of those involved in *Hit List* were at some point involved with *Maximumrocknroll,* not to mention the fact that some of our contributors have been the subject of *Maximum's* ire, one could conceivably get that impression. But life isn't black and white, it's a complex learning process, both personally and socially. Our magazines are both a part of this process — personally for those of us involved in the respective publications and socially in the punk community. I've learned a lot from *MRR,* from both positive and negative things that have come out of its pages. Life isn't physics — it's not enough to be simply reactionary, and there are no easy answers. I know there are people at *MRR* who understand that, and I wish the magazine reflected that fact more fairly. Rather than supplying pat, one-dimensional answers, I'd love to see you guys start asking hard questions — as you said yourself, "It goes without saying that your credentialed contributors (ah! to sup at the table of such noble, famous men!) can't feed off of their bitterness toward *MRR* forever," but at the same time, look how far the same tired agenda has gotten *Maximumrocknroll.* Having said that, I wish you guys the best in trying to rekindle (rather than ham-fistedly regurgitate) the flame that once was *Maximumrocknroll...*
...the scene still needs you.

— Dave Johnson

The Big Satan Nazi Manson Conspiracy To Rule The World

Robert Anton Wilson makes an interesting observation in the latest issue of Gnosis: "My major difference with conspiracy theorists is that most of them have never heard the word 'maybe'." This lack of familiarity with the concept "maybe" clearly applies to Kevin Coogan, who wrote the article on black metal in issue #1 of Hit List.

My name is Jan Bruun, and I was described in the article as an "obvious cultural influence on Vikernes". The murderer/arsonist Varg Vikernes supposedly did what he did to gain his reputation as Norway's Charles Manson thanks to tapes sold by me. Vikernes had apparently never even heard of Charles Manson until after he was imprisoned. Coogan writes: "It seems almost impossible to believe that Vikernes would not have known about Hypertonia World Enterprises", which is my label. But I have never been in touch with Vikernes in any way. I sold a few copies of Mayhem's first album in 1988, and communicated with Euronymous (who was later murdered by Vikernes) only about records and payment. The band members weren't even satanists back then; they called their music "total death metal". I have not been in touch with the black metal scene at all, either before or since that time. My contributions to the book *Lords of Chaos* mainly involved the provision of newspaper and magazine clippings, as well as copies of some court documents.

In the article I'm described as an "avowed social darwinist", but I've never called myself any such thing. In *Healter Skelter* magazine and the Manson documentary "No Sense Makes Sense", I'm merely pointing out that so-called civilisation can crumble quickly in crisis situations, such as when there's a lack of food. People will kill each other for food or even eat each other. This is already happening in several places as we speak. In spite of all our clever inventions, the human brain has not evolved that much in the last 20,000 years. We are still—to some extent—animals. I'm also called a "Malthusian". I don't even know what the hell that means.

— Jan Bruun

Nowhere in my article did I say that Varg Vikernes acted as he did because he heard a tape sold by Jan Brunn, who I refer to in exactly four sentences of my black metal article. Nor do I discuss any "Satan Nazi Manson Conspiracy to Rule the World." In a section of my article questioning Moynihan's employment of rather dubious "Jungian archtypes", I suggest that a far less opaque key to understanding Vikernes' actions lies in the fact that he had been a Nazi skinhead before suddenly becoming a black metal Satanist. I then point out that Vikernes' extremism may well have been influenced by death culture peddlers like Brunn's Hypertonia World Enterprises (HWE), which hypes Charles Manson and also sells material related to the Church of Satan (according to *Healter Skelter*).

I mentioned HWE because it is based in Vikernes' home town and because Brunn told *Healter Skelter* that he was in contact with Euronymous in the 1980s and sold Mayhem LPs. Brunn, however, writes that

he only carried Mayhem's first LP in 1988 and that his ties to Euronymous were purely commercial. He also insists that he is completely ignorant about the world of black metal. His self-proclaimed lack of knowledge, however, doesn't prevent him from telling us that Vikernes "apparently" never heard the name "Charles Manson" before being jailed. Nor does it prevent him from expressing sympathy for Euronymous, "a much loved and respected guy who is sorely missed by many", in his *Healter Skelter* interview.

Did HWE have any direct cultural influence on Vikernes? Brunn's answer is an emphatic "no", and to be fair it should be pointed out that in his *Healter Skelter* interview Brunn himself characterized Vikernes as "a laughable, undisciplined stupid character" and severely criticized the black metal "pea-brains" who now consider him a hero (although I'd like to know if Brunn's disgust with Vikernes also extends to Kadmon and journals like *Filosphem*...and speaking of "pea-brains", who does Brunn think is buying his Manson tapes?). But that does not rule out the possibility that HWE-distributed materials exerted an *indirect* influence on Vikernes. After all, Vikernes never met Anton LaVey either. It may be true that Vikernes was completely unaware of HWE, even though Brunn is, by his own admission, in no position to know. The real point is that this is the kind of issue that I believe Moynihan should have examined in *Lords of Chaos*. Because Moynihan himself seems to be a believer in racial archtypes, however, he chose to rely on Kadmon's "Jungian" theories. Is this point really so hard to understand?

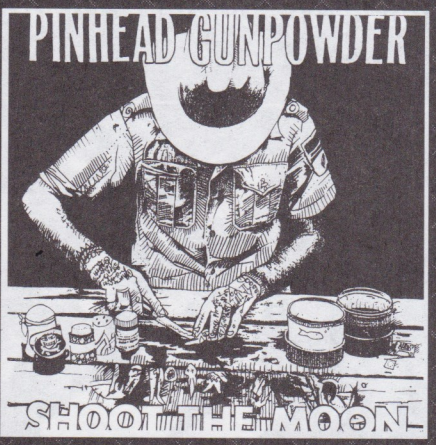
As far as Brunn being an "avowed Social Darwinist", this too comes from *Healter Skelter*, where the interviewer asks Brunn: "In a previous interview you defined yourself as a 'social-darwinist'. Could you tell us exactly what you mean by that...?" Brunn replies: "I'd define social darwinism as a realization that man is not so different from animals as he would like to think, and that Charles Darwin's theories on the 'survival of the fittest' in the jungle is an unavoidable mechanism seen operating among humans at all times." Given Brunn's statements about overpopulation leading to social breakdown, both in *Healter Skelter* and his *Hit List* letter, I remain perplexed as to why he can't understand the use of the term "Malthusian" to describe his views.

— Kevin Coogan

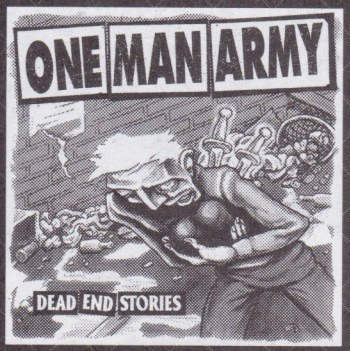
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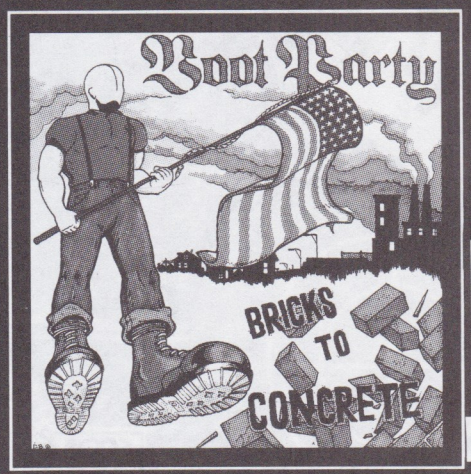


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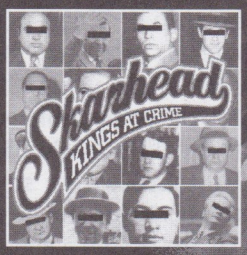
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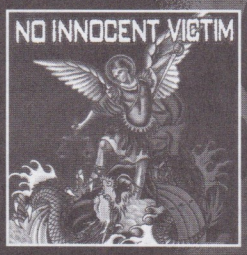
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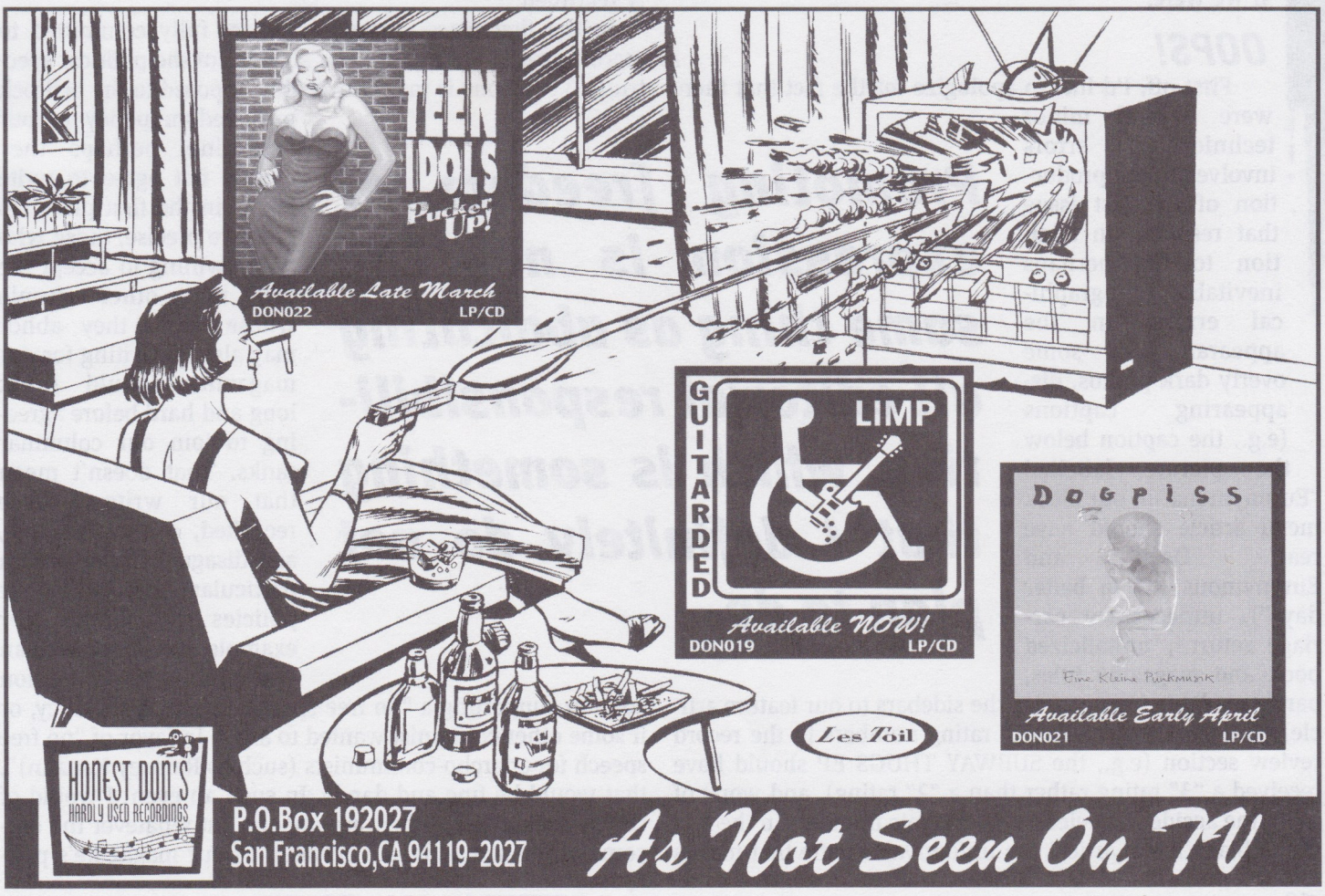


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HIT SQUAD

JEFF BALE

READBETWEENTHELINES



Welcome to the second issue of *Hit List*. Some of you may have hoped that, like a bad penny, we would simply disappear after putting out our premiere issue. I regret to inform you that this is not the case. We plan to be around for a long time, and only a loss of passion on our part or a loss of interest on the part of our readers will result in our disappearance. To paraphrase gay activists, "we're here, we're not queer, get used to it." Now that I think about it, we are a bit "queer" in the old fashioned sense of "odd" or "not quite right in the head", though—contrary to Norb's remarks last time—we are certainly not "gay", either in the archaic sense of being "cheerful" or "carefree" or in the current sense of being homosexual. Not that it would matter one iota if we were.

OOPS!

First off, I'd like to apologize for the fact that there were several minor technical errors involved in the production of the last issue that resulted, in addition to the perhaps inevitable typographical errors, in the appearance of some overly dark photos, disappearing captions (e.g., the caption below the picture labelled "Euronymous" in our black metal article should have read "Dead and Euronymous (r.) in better days"), unnecessary carriage returns, unitalicized book and magazine titles, barely readable footnotes (in the sidebars to our feature article), and the transposition of rating numbers in the record review section (e.g., the SUBWAY THUGS EP should have received a "3" rating rather than a "2" rating), and worst of all — the accidental deletion of endnote numbers in the text of the black metal artical (an unforgivable gaffe that makes it virtually impossible to identify the sources for specific quotes. *Mea culpa!* These mistakes were caused by a variety of problems, including those deriving from translating submitted materials using different word processing programs into those compatible with our own, making the transition from text files to Quark, printing errors, poor scheduling, and the exhaustion stemming from working five or six 20-hour days to get the issue to Mordam by the deadline. The fact that we lacked a separate office space, were limited to using one computer at a time, and didn't have a quality printer, also created unnecessary problems. A few of these problems were not yet solved in time for this issue, but hopefully all of them will be overcome by the next issue

"VIRTUALLY ANYTHING GOES"

Last time I indicated that, as far as our editorial policy is concerned, "short of outright slander [and, I should have added, libel], virtually anything goes". In order to avoid potential future misunderstandings, perhaps I should further specify what I meant by "virtually". Despite my own unshakable philosophical support for free speech, as well as our magazine's general anti-censorship policy, there are certain editorial guidelines which need to be made explicit. There are in fact circumstances which might foreseeably lead me to decide not to publish a particular column or article, or even to get rid of certain writers that I had previously recruited.

In the first place, although we are fully committed to recruiting original thinkers on all sides of the political spectrum, if someone is incontrovertibly opposed to the bedrock pro-freedom policy of our magazine, perhaps they should not agree to write for us in the first place. To be more precise, those who are unwilling to accept the fact that other people whose views they abhor may also be writing for our magazine should think long and hard before agreeing to join our columnar ranks. That doesn't mean that our writers, once recruited, cannot disagree, and disagree strongly, with particular aspects of our policies or views. For example, if Ramsey Kanaan wished to write an opinion column supporting a "no free speech for fascists" policy, or if some other columnist wanted to argue in favor of "no free speech for anarcho-communists (such as Ramsey Kanaan)", that would be fine and dandy. In such an event I would of course seek to rebut their arguments, but whatever the outcome of the actual debate between us our magazine's poli-

Promoting freedom of expression is not the same thing as abdicating all editorial responsibilities, which is something that I definitely do not plan to do.

cy is to provide all sorts of thoughtful people—including those whose views we ourselves deplore—with the opportunity to discuss important issues, and that policy will not change as long as I am the editor. The resulting debates will be allowed to continue as long as fresh arguments are being presented by either side, but it would be redundant, not to mention boring, to endlessly reprise the very same arguments over and over again in every issue of *Hit List*, so at some point the matter will have to be dropped so that we can move on. If, at that juncture, any of our writers decide that they can no longer live with the consequences of our magazine's fundamental policies and aims, they are free to stop contributing to it.

Second, we are not going to allow personal vendettas to get out of hand in the pages of *Hit List*. If someone wants to indulge in occasional offhand insults in a humorous vein, that's fine. Likewise, if someone expresses virulent hostility toward others for alleged moral transgressions, character flaws, or stupidity, that too is acceptable as long as serious issues are being debated and some effort is being made to provide justifications for that hostility. Substantive polemics concerning actual issues are invariably entertaining and informative, however harsh and belligerent the terms they are couched in, but once they degenerate primarily into nasty invectives and vicious personal attacks that have little or nothing to do with those larger issues, it will be necessary to put an end to them. Childish personal insults should not be substituted for rational debates, however heated they become, and endless "flame wars" about the same issue tend to become tedious very quickly. If any of our writers repeatedly refuse to control themselves and abide by these modest guidelines, I may be forced to show them the door. Note that it is only the actual form of the argument or debate that I am referring to here, not the specific content-oriented viewpoints of the participants. By extension it also goes without saying that making knowingly fraudulent or blatantly libelous statements about other people will simply not be tolerated. It's one thing to say that someone is "an asshole who doesn't know shit from shinola", since such a remark—true or not—is merely a reflection of the overall animus felt toward that person by the writer. But it is another thing altogether to claim, for example, that someone tried to molest a child or rape someone without providing any factual evidence for that claim. As controversial as I aim to make *Hit List*, I have no intention of acquiring that reputation by regularly taking the "low road" or hitting "below the belt".

Finally, when I recruit people as *Hit List* writers, it is generally for particular reasons. The bottom line is that they have to know how to write, have to have strong opinions, have to have a sense of humor, and have to actually know something about politics and/or underground music. As such, they will be expected to maintain a relatively high level of quality in their submissions to us. If any of our writers begin turning in hastily-written, poorly-reasoned, and otherwise half-assed columns, we will probably refuse to run them. If they continue doing so on a regular basis, they'll soon have to find another forum in which to express themselves. I have no interest in publishing a bunch of worthless or subpar crap in this magazine, and as the editor-in-chief I wish to assure both our readers and our contributors that I'm going to exercise my veto power ruthlessly in this regard. Nobody should think for even one minute that we're somehow obligated to publish any old piece of garbage that they deign to submit to us, because neither such garbage nor such a petulant attitude will pass muster around here. In this context I feel bound and determined to state for the record that we have no intention of ever publishing fiction or poetry (other than some blatantly satirical ersatz "poetry" from baby sue magazine)—subpar or otherwise—in the pages of *Hit List*, so don't waste your valuable time submitting them to us.

I was vehemently opposed to...discriminatory policies when they were advocated and maintained by the racist White Citizens' Councils in the 1950s and early 1960s, and I am equally opposed to those that are nowadays being peddled in the name of "diversity" and "multiculturalism".

Note that none of the above strictures is intended to limit people's ability to express whatever views they wish to about broader social, political, cultural, or musical issues, merely the ways in which they actually go about expressing those views. They are solely intended to keep this magazine from declining in quality, degenerating to the level of "nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah, nyah" attacks on other people and entities, or resorting to the all-too-common "fuck you, you fuckin' fuck" fanzine approach. (Sorry, Mykel, I know

you're anxiously awaiting more mud-slinging, but...) Promoting freedom of expression is not the same thing as abdicating all editorial responsibilities, which is something that I definitely do not plan to do. I would prefer never to have to exercise this editorial veto power, and will only do so in exceptional circumstances. But be aware that it is a possibility

Finally, I wish to emphasize a very important point, which should in any case be obvious: the opinions expressed by our writers are solely their own. They are not necessarily representative of my own views about particular subjects, and indeed often directly contradict my own values and opinions. In this very issue, for example, I find myself in complete disagreement with some of ShitEd's views about abortion, the alleged "sanctity" of human life, and the injustice of adopting of radical population control methods. Likewise I do not agree with Vic Bondi's dismissive attitude about today's punks or his expressions of support for the destruction of punk and the creation of something altogether new, nor am I entirely happy with the tone of Brett Mathews' column, and the list could be extended. But I did not select our writers because I expected to always agree with their opinions. Rather, I selected them because I knew they were entertaining writers who were not afraid to express provocative views, regardless of who they offended—myself included—in the process. Period.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

This issue contains the initial column by Claude Bessy (formerly "Kickboy Face", a moniker he now feels is inappropriate given his advancing age and growing maturity. Since "Kickman Face" lacks a certain *frisson*, from now on address him as Claude, motherfuckers); Bob Black of *The Abolition of Work, Beneath the Underground,* and *Friendly Fire* fame; Vic Bondi of ARTICLES OF FAITH, JONES VERY, and ALLOY; East Bay Ray of the DKs; and Gregg Turner of VOM and the ANGRY SAMOANS; Ian evr of Equal Vision Records, not to mention Jeff Dahl's first appearance as an *HL* record reviewer. Jello has once again flaked out (perhaps for good), as has Tony Slug (temporarily), whereas Joey Vindictive and Russell Quan are taking a one-issue vacation. We are also in the process of actively recruiting other opinionated assholes for our next issue, including Frank Discussion of the FEEDERZ (almost certainly), Blag Dahlia of the DWARVES (probably), Leonard Graves Phillips of the DICKIES (hopefully), Stewart Home (hopefully), and several rockin' women writers who have a terrific sense of humor and an aggressive edge to their writing (such as Carmen Ghia from Perv magazine, the FRIED ABORTIONS, and LENNONBURGER; Leslie Goldman, editor of *Carbon 14* magazine; and Erika Larson; among others).

GIRLS, GIRLS, GIRLS

Speaking of women, some dolts have complained that our first issue didn't feature any female columnists and had a (presumably pernicious) "male" vibe. Boo fucking hoo! I have no idea what a "male" vibe even is, but I did in fact ask several cool women I know to write columns or features for our zine. A couple were initially a bit shy about the prospect of writing at all, others couldn't produce something on such short notice, and one adopted a haughty "wait and see" attitude (hi, Beth). Let me make one thing perfectly clear, however. My goal is to recruit the very best writers I can find, providing that they 1) have a belligerent tone, 2) have a black sense of humor, 3) have unconventional ideas, and 4) know a lot about rock 'n' roll. Personally, I couldn't care less whether these writers end up being male or female, white or non-white, or straight or gay. I've always believed that every individual should be judged solely on the basis of his or her own individual merit, without regard to race, creed, and color—as Martin Luther King and other genuine civil rights activists (as opposed to race-baiting con artists) have always insisted—and am adamantly opposed to the establishment of discriminatory race- and gender-based systems, regardless of the rationales underlying them. I was vehemently opposed to such discriminatory policies when they were advocated and maintained by the racist White Citizens' Councils in the 1950s and early 1960s, and I am equally opposed to those that are nowadays being peddled (often by anti-white "racists of color" and female sexists) in the name of "diversity" and "multiculturalism", unfortunately with the official sanction and coercive sponsorship of the federal government itself. The only sort of "diversity" that matters to me in this magazine is intellectual diversity, and for that I make no apologies whatsoever. Moreover, although it's easy enough to find intelligent women who are good writers, it's considerably harder to find ones that are both sharp-tongued and nonconformist in their thinking, and harder still to find ones who are fanatically devoted to rock 'n' roll. (It is a shocking and somewhat inexplicable fact, for example, that for every obsessive female record collector there are dozens of obsessive male record collectors.) When I do run across such women, I plan to go out of my way to recruit them. In the meantime, don't expect me to institute an "affirmative discrimination" program or fill up the pages of *Hit List* with legions of infantile "wimmin" who have nothing better to do than whine incessantly about the omnipresence of sexism, the "objectification" of women, and the inherently "oppressive" nature of men. If you're looking for that type of simplistic nonsense, there are already dozens of other publications you can turn to, ranging from *Ms. Magazine* to various "riot grrrl" zines. End of story.

BACK WITH A BANG

Issue three of *Hit List* will be marked by the (hopefully) long-awaited return of the musical portion of my columns, "For Those About to Punk Out, I Salute You". In said section I'll be discussing that which really matters, rock 'n' fucking roll, in more depth and at more length than is possible in my regular record reviews. Next time around I'll be discussing, among other things, the various compilations and compilation series devoted to 60's garage rock and post-1977 punk rock that are nowadays proliferating like wildfire. ⊕

DROPKICK MURPHYS

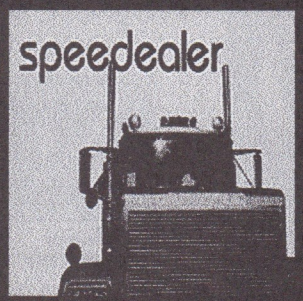


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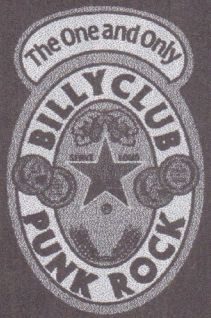
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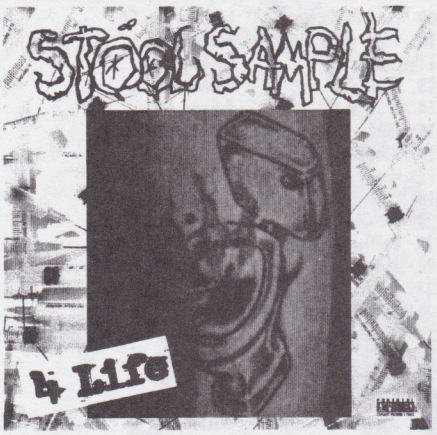
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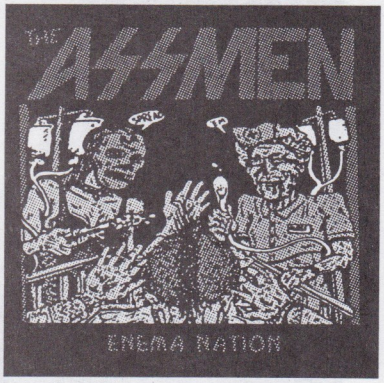


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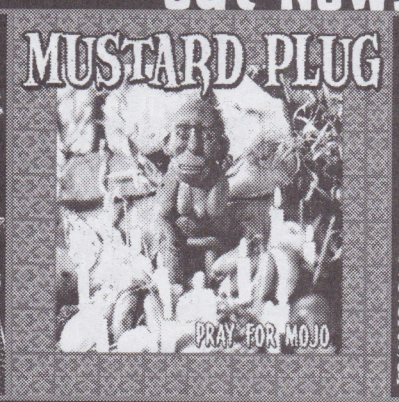
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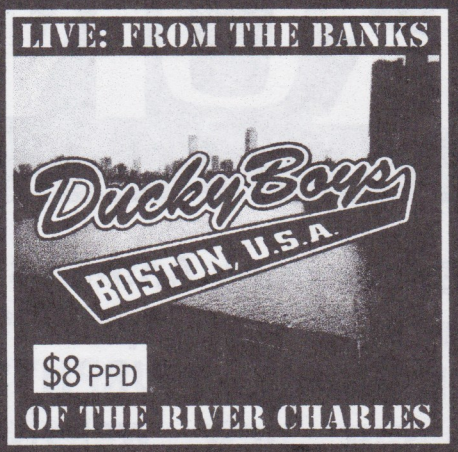
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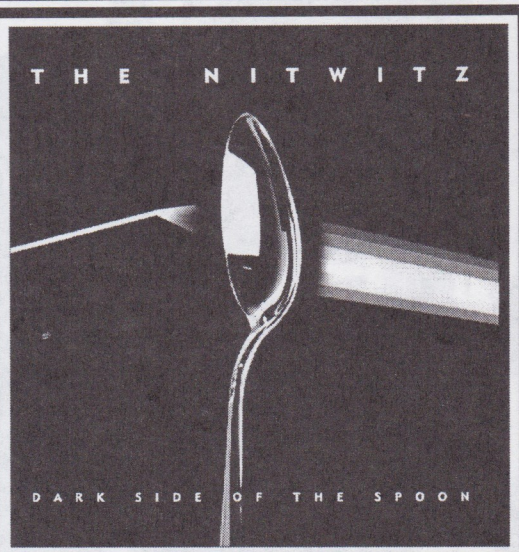
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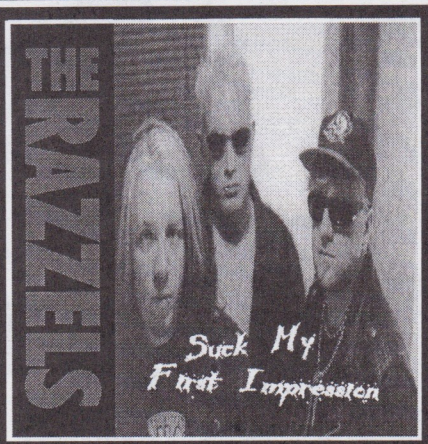
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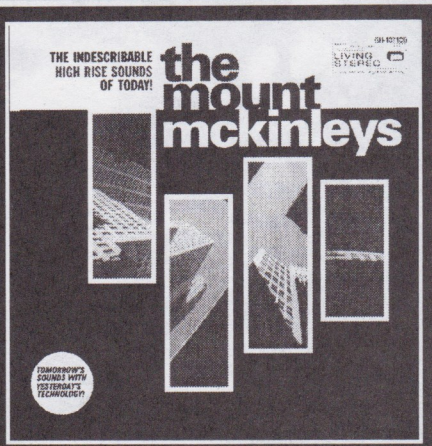
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TRANSCONTINENTAL OI!:

AN INTERVIEW WITH THE



TEMPLARS

BRETT: BEFORE OI, WHAT WERE YOU ALL DOING? HOW DID YOU GET PULLED INTO IT, AND WHAT TYPE OF MUSIC WERE YOU LISTENING TO?

Barry: Before I got into punk and Oi, I was listening to a lot of hard rock. As I got into punk, I started listening to bands like the Clash, the Pistols, and the Ramones. Before that I was listening to Kiss, Van Halen, and a lot of other hard rock stuff. I was about twelve.

BRETT: HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW?

Barry: I'm thirty-three. I've been listening to Oi since it started, really. The first punk 7" I ever got was "All Out Attack" by Blitz. I was really into hard rock and glam, stuff like Bowie and Sweet.

BRETT: FROM BLITZ, WHERE DID YOU GO? WHAT WERE THE FIRST THREE OI BANDS YOU GOT INTO?

Barry: I would say that Blitz, the Four Skins, and the Business were probably the first three, and then, around the same time, bands like the Upstarts and the Cockney Rejects. All those groups kind of came around at the same time. Then, as I got deeper into it, I started listening to more obscure stuff. In terms of U.S. bands, I was a big Effigies fan, 'cause I'm from Chicago.

Carl: I got into punk when I was fifteen, and I'm twenty-six now. I got turned onto the Sex Pistols and other bands by a couple guys from school, then I went off to Denmark to go to school and I just went crazy into it. (laughs) I was listening to bands like the Exploited, the Partisans, that kind of stuff. Then I got tired of the mohawk stuff, I decided I'd rather be a skinhead. I listened to mostly skinhead bands, anyway.

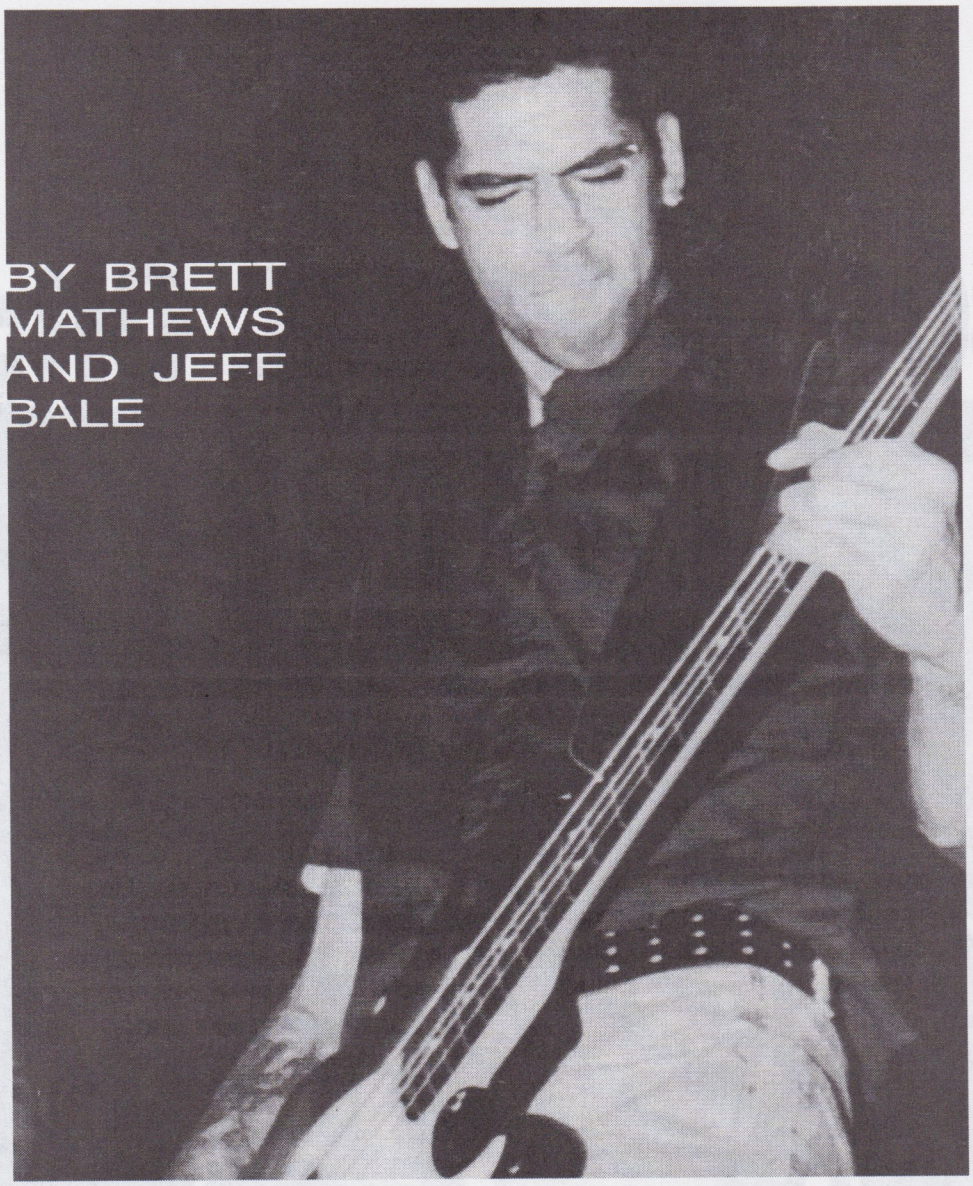
JEFF: SO, WERE YOU IN NEW YORK WHEN THIS WAS GOING ON? ARE YOU AND PHIL BOTH FROM NEW YORK?

Carl: Me and Phil are from New York. Only Barry is from Chicago.

JEFF: I'M FROM CHICAGO, TOO.

Carl: Oh, really?

JEFF: YEAH, WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT LATER.



BY BRETT MATHEWS AND JEFF BALE

Barry: Now we know why you like the Effigies. (laughs)
Phil: Before I got into punk and Oi, I was also into a lot of hard rock and early 80s New Wave stuff, all that. But mostly a lot of rock stuff, like Rush and Yes.

BRETT: SO YOU WERE A "PROGRESSIVE" ROCKER, EH?

Phil: Yes, I taught myself how to play drums. I was about eleven, and my next door neighbor had a rock band and I was interested in drums, so I used to go over there and fuck around on drums. So I liked any band with cool drumming, including Yes and King Crimson.
Carl: Phil's never even owned a drum set!
Phil: Yeah, I've never owned a drum set.
Carl: He always borrows them.
Phil: I own the sticks and shit. Anyway, a friend of mine got me into streetpunk stuff like the Upstarts, the Rejects, and the Exploited. I just started buying punk records, and when selecting those records I'd pay special attention to whoever they thanked on the sleeves, then I'd buy their fucking records as well. I figured that they probably sounded similar and played on the same bills.

BRETT: YOU CAN GET TURNED ON TO A LOT OF GOOD STUFF BY TAKING THAT APPROACH.

Phil: Yeah, I know. At that point I was about sixteen, and was still in high school.

BRETT: AND HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW?
Phil: Uhhh...

JEFF: I'M DEFINITELY OLDER THAN YOU, SO DON'T FEEL BAD ABOUT IT!

Phil: I'm older than Carl, but younger than Barry.

BRETT: ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING A U. S. TOUR, OR DID YOU JUST FLY OUT TO CALIFORNIA TO DO TWO OR THREE SHOWS BEFORE GOING BACK EAST?

Phil: Yeah.

JEFF: SO JUST SACRAMENTO, SAN FRANCISCO, AND THEN...

Barry: Home! One, possibly two shows in San Francisco.

BRETT: HAVE YOU GUYS ACTUALLY DONE THE "START ON THE EAST COAST AND DO THE WHOLE COUNTRY" TYPE OF TOUR?

Barry: No, our lives are way too busy. It's kind of hard to just take off and go on an extended tour.
Phil: We'll never do tours, I don't think. Except maybe European tours. If we think there's a big scene somewhere it might be worth it, but if it takes more than eight hours we're not going to fucking drive, so...
Barry: The reason you will never see us do a full U.S. tour is that I work full time and go to college, and these guys are full time students. We've got a lot going on.

BRETT: WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO SCHOOL FOR?

Barry: I'm majoring in Meteorology.
Carl: I'm majoring in Scandinavian Studies at the University of Washington.

JEFF: SO YOU'RE LIVING IN SEATTLE NOW?

Carl: Yeah. We're spreading out across the entire country.
Phil: I'm going to medical school in New York.
BRETT: SO LIVING IN NEW YORK AND SEATTLE HAS GOT TO MAKE BAND

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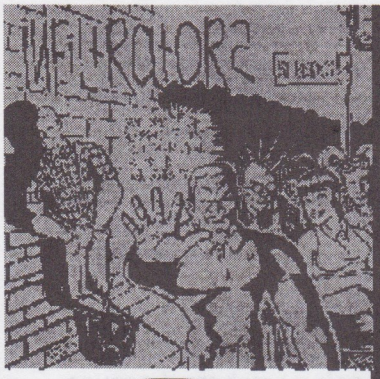
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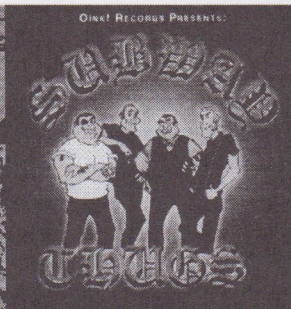
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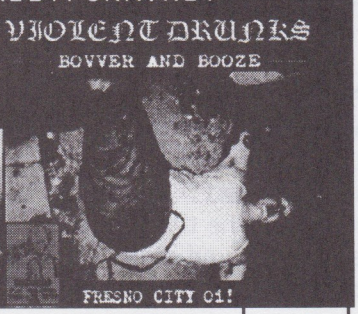




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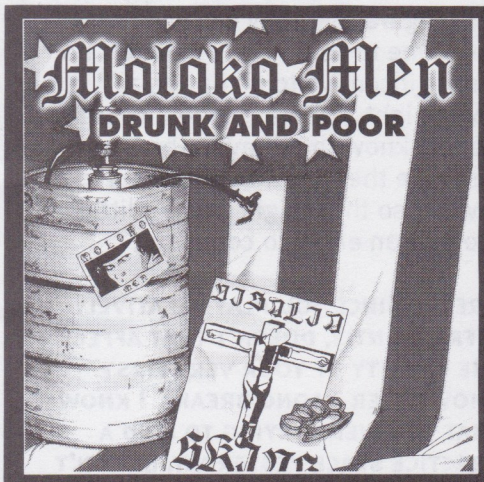


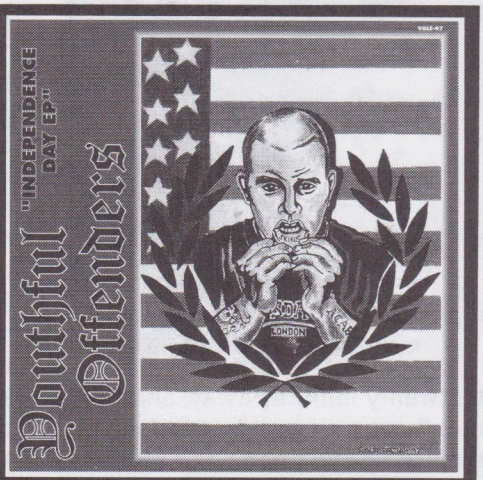


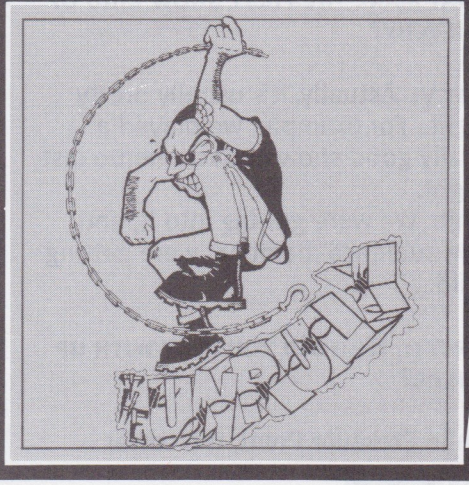


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Barry: You've got to figure Chicago into the equation, too. I'm going to college there, at Columbia College. Hopefully, I'll be going to school on the East Coast soon.

BRETT: SO THIS TEMPLARS LINEUP WAS FORMED WHEN YOU ALL LIVED IN NEW YORK, AND THEN YOU WENT YOUR SEPARATE WAYS AND DECIDED TO KEEP THE BAND GOING?

Phil: Barry joined in 1995, but before that we were an old New York-based band. It was originally me, Carl, and this dude named Don on bass. The thing with me and Carl is that he lived around the corner from me, and a friend of mine brought him over to the house when he still had a mohawk. I was then listening to a lot of Oi and punk music, so I thought "fuck, yeah, here's someone nearby who listens to the same shit, that's cool". So we hung out and listened to records, and he had this beat-up 4-track recorder and his brother had a drum set, so we used to go over there and fuck around. Later, we wrote some original songs, and I said "fuck it, man, let's do this shit for real, we're putting so much time into it, so let's find a bassist and go for it". We knew this guy named Don who went to the same community college that we were going to at the time, and he was into a lot of hardcore, which Carl liked at the time. He was a friend, and it's always good to form bands with people you already know as opposed to total fucking strangers who may trip out on you. So we brought him in, and we started playing gigs.

Carl: He had another band also.

Phil: Yeah, it was a competition. His band was going nowhere, because he was playing the same old fucking hardcore shit that everyone else was doing, and he would skip out on practices and miss recording sessions, so a lot of our early releases don't even have his fucking face on the fucking CD. We felt like "fuck him", you know? You snooze, you lose. What the fuck? The guy lived twenty minutes away, and he couldn't even make it to practice, or even pick up the phone and say he was gonna be late. Whatever.

Carl: So I wound up playing bass.



BRETT: DO YOU GUYS EVER HAVE A CHANCE TO PRACTICE THESE DAYS?

Carl: We usually practice once before a show.

Phil: A few weeks before a gig, we all agree on a certain set list.

BRETT: SO, IN THIS PARTICULAR INSTANCE, YOU JUST SAW EACH OTHER FOR THE FIRST TIME YESTERDAY?

Barry: Not exactly. We played a show in New York in December, which was our first show since August, and we did that after only one practice.

JEFF: WHEN I WAS TEACHING A COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY BETWEEN 1994 AND 1996, IT SEEMED LIKE THE TEMPLARS WERE PLAYING ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS OR SO. HAVE THE SHOWS BEEN FEWER AND FARTHER BETWEEN IN RECENT TIMES?

Phil: Yes, but in a way that's good, because you don't get "played out" or wear out your welcome.

BRETT: SO A TEMPLARS SHOW BECOMES A SORT OF SPECIAL EVENT RATHER THAN BEING JUST A REGULAR OCCURRENCE.

Phil: Yeah, otherwise people may get sick of seeing you and decide to stay home and watch Jeopardy.

Barry: One thing I've noticed about a lot of bands is that people get bored or at least too lazy to go out and see them every time they play. They figure that they can wait until next time to see them, so there's no strong incentive to go out on a given night. Whereas when we play, people know that it might be the last time they are able to see us for awhile, so they might make a little more of an effort to come out.

BRETT: SINCE YOU PLAY RELATIVELY INFREQUENTLY, DOESN'T THAT AFFECT THE QUALITY OF YOUR VERY FIRST SHOW AFTER A LONG BREAK? I KNOW THAT YOU WERE TRYING TO FIND A PRACTICE SPACE YESTERDAY. DOESN'T THAT MAKE THE FIRST SHOW KIND OF SKETCHY?

Barry: Actually, it's usually pretty tight. For example, we played a really good show in Sacramento last night.

Phil: We were getting into it, and the audience members were getting wild...

BRETT: WHO DID YOU PLAY WITH UP THERE?

Phil: Pressure Point, the Lower

Class Brats, and the Forgotten, all good bands.

BRETT: WHAT DID YOU THINK OF PRESSURE POINT?

Barry: They had a lot of energy.
Phil: Yeah. They're really good guys.
JEFF: HOW DID YOU END UP SELECTING THE NAME TEMPLARS, THE NAME OF A MEDIEVAL CHIVALRIC ORDER, FOR YOUR BAND?

Phil: I've been into medieval history since I was a kid.

JEFF: THE TEMPLARS WERE RATHER EXTRAORDINARY, WEREN'T THEY?

Phil: Yeah, they were notorious in their day. We wanted to select a more interesting name than, say, Boots. I know what fucking boots are, but how many people know what a Templar is? Maybe we can get some of these thick ass motherfuckers that come to our shows to start opening books along with their minds. (laughs)
Carl: A lot of people have gotten in touch with me to say that they started reading books about the real Templars, and then thank me for turning me on to some cool shit. Plus, there are some weird conspiracy theories about the Templars and their legacy.
(everyone laughs)

JEFF: BUT THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT THE HISTORICAL TEMPLARS IS THAT THEY WERE A KNIGHTLY ORDER WHOSE PRIMARY FUNCTION WAS TO DEFEND CHRISTIANS TRAVELLING IN THE HOLY LAND FROM MUSLIM ATTACKS. BUT IN THE PROCESS THEY ACQUIRED SO MUCH WEALTH THAT THE FRENCH KING LATER ARRESTED THEM ALL, TRIED THEM, TORTURED THEM, BURNED MANY OF THEM AT THE STAKE, CONFISCATED MOST OF THEIR PROPERTY, AND ALMOST SUCCEEDED IN EXTERMINATING THE ENTIRE ORDER.

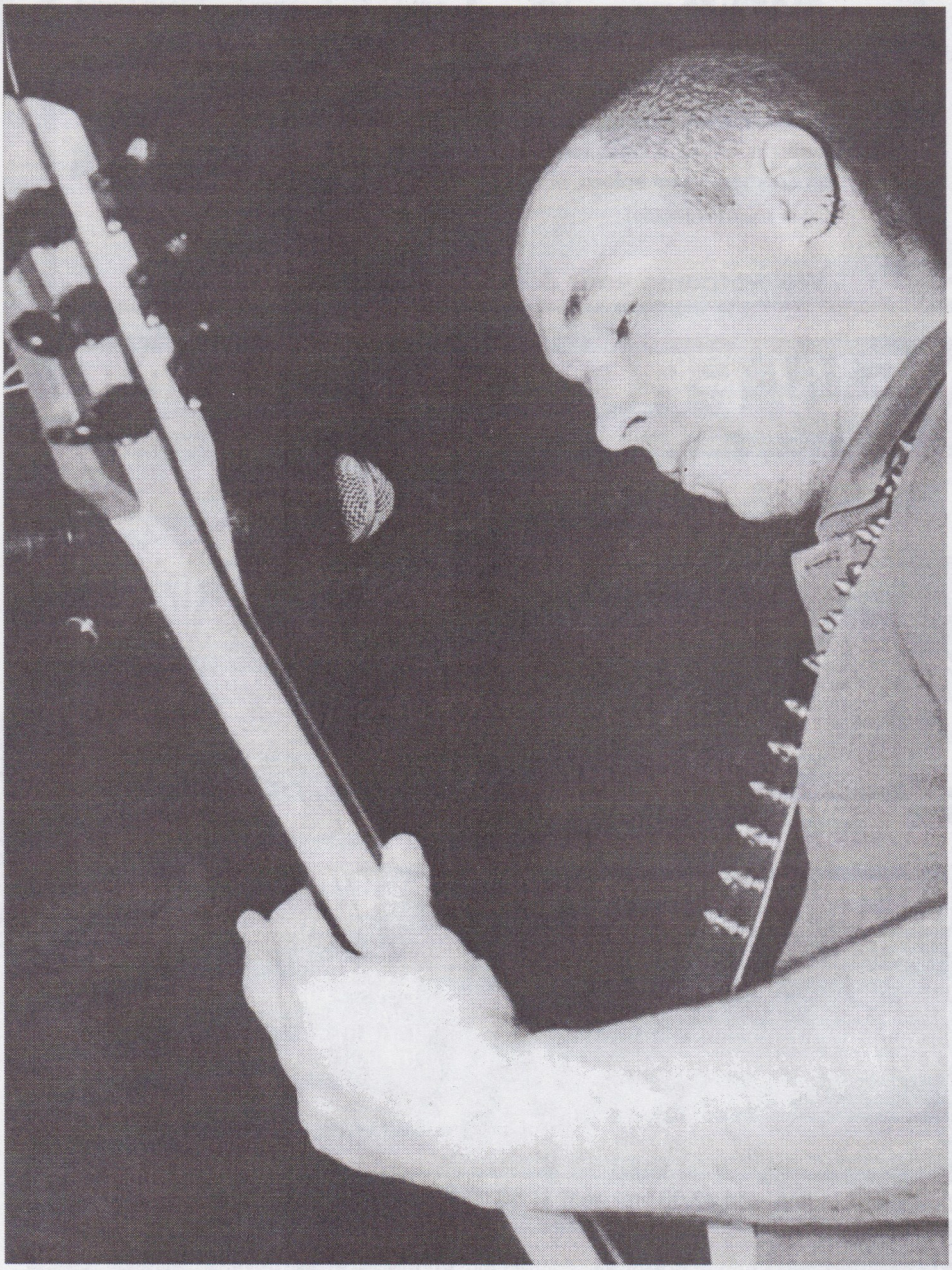
Phil: Yeah, they were sworn to an oath of poverty, so the money was just sitting there unused. And they would just buy land and set up banking institutions, so the financially strapped French king decided he wanted all that money, and he managed to persuade the pope to trump up phony charges against them so that they could be excommunicated and persecuted.

JEFF: I WAS WONDERING IF THE FACT THAT THE TEMPLARS WERE PERSECUTED IS SOMETHING YOU SOMEHOW RELATED TO? IT'S FAIRLY COMMON FOR SKINHEADS TO FEEL AS IF THE WHOLE WORLD IS AGAINST THEM.

Phil: Yeah, it's like the way various political factions try to manipulate skinheads for their own purposes. They use them up, and then when they're done with them and don't need them anymore, they abandon them and move on. Let them get arrested! Let them get fucked! These guys were hired to protect Jerusalem, and then when they had no use for them anymore, they tried to destroy them. It's the same with these political factions who try to exploit skinheads.

BRETT: THEY USE THEM AND THEN ABUSE THEM.
JEFF: THE GENERAL PERCEPTION IS THAT SKINS AND OTHER PEOPLE WHO ARE INTO OI MUSIC ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR A GREAT DEAL OF VIOLENCE. DO YOU THINK THAT'S A FALSE PERCEPTION?

Phil: It's mainly a load of media crap. You never see guys like us on



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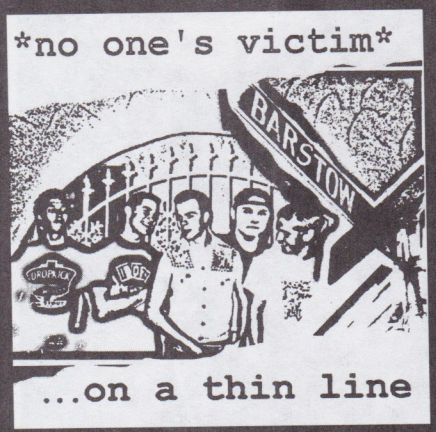


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Geraldo Rivera or other talk shows. They're not interested in what we do for a living, whether we go to school, why we're in a band, or what we do when we hang out. "What, no fighting?", they say. "Nah, only if we have to" is our reply. Then they decide not to have us on their show. They want guys who kidnap children and throw old people off the fucking roof so that their ratings will soar.

BRETT: SINCE THE BEGINNING, THE TEMPLARS HAVE GENERALLY RELIED ON LOW-FI FOUR-TRACK RECORDINGS. THE MAJORITY OF YOUR PAST RECORDS HAVE BEEN LOW BUDGET AFFAIRS, AND THIS IS THE "TEMPLARS SOUND" THAT MANY PEOPLE HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO. NOW YOU HAVE A NEW ALBUM OUT, AND IN THIS INSTANCE YOU SPENT SOME SERIOUS TIME IN THE STUDIO AND PUT MONEY INTO THE RECORDING. HOW DID THAT TRANSLATE IN TERMS OF THE OVERALL FEEL OF THE MUSIC? DID YOU TRY TO GET A RAW, LO-FI SOUND OUT OF AN EXPENSIVE RECORDING SESSION?

Barry: Actually, I think the new album we recently did for GMM, "Omne Datum Optimum", is closer to our live sound than anything else we've ever done. A lot of times, with the old stuff, Carl and Bill would jam and come up with a bass track, then Carl would go back and write lyrics for it and do all kinds of guitar work and dubs. Whereas with this one we only spent about three days in the studio, which perhaps amounted to a total of thirty or thirty-five hours working on it.
Carl: And the songs we recorded, except for the older songs that we redid, were all new songs that we never played together. They were songs that we had on a cassette that we just circulated privately.
Barry: We practiced and ran through all the songs on the first day, then recorded the basic tracks the next day. Carl and I then did the bass overdubs, and he did all the vocals and lead guitar work on the third day. That was all there was to it.
Carl: I had to improvise on the solos. (everyone laughs)
Barry: It's really raw and has a good live feel to it, but was recorded very professionally.

BRETT: SO THE GUITARS ARE PUNCHIER?

All: Yeah.
Barry: And I can hear all my mistakes! Before I even joined the band, I remember the first time I saw these guys play live, I thought "damn, these guys have a really good, harder and punkier sound live than they do on their studio releases. I was kind of surprised.
Phil: That cheap sound that we always got, the eight-track recording, we wanted that sound. We wanted to recreate that 1970s-sound used by the early punk bands because we were all into that shit. We wanted our stuff to sound just like that. So when we went into the studio this time, we just wanted to let people know that we can sound really fucking heavy if we want to, and that it would be just as powerful.
Barry: I think that a lot of the newer songs we're writing are a little bit more complex, a little more mature than the stuff we were doing a couple of years ago, so they kind of

needed the better production.

BRETT: WHAT DO YOU THINK THE TEMPLARS FANS WILL THINK OF IT? I GUESS IT'S NOT REALLY A NEW SOUND, BUT A DIFFERENT VERSION OF THE SAME SOUND.

Phil: They'll like it. I think they'll like it.

BRETT: IS THAT THE DIRECTION THAT YOU'RE GOING TO BE MOVING IN FROM HERE ON OUT?

Phil: We're taking it as it comes. There's a single coming out that was recorded back in the old eight-track fashion, and then we'll have this new release coming out that sounds heavy as hell.

BRETT: IS THAT GOING TO BE ON TKO?

Phil: No, it's going to be on another label based in Chicago. So the next release will sound like all the old shit.
Barry: We're already making plans to do another full-length for GMM down in Atlanta.

JEFF: THAT'S A GOOD LABEL, A VERY GOOD LABEL.

Barry: Yeah, we'll be doing singles, compilation tracks, stuff like that.

BRETT: IT SEEMS LIKE YOU LIKE PUTTING OUT LOTS OF 7" RECORDS. ARE YOU ALL RECORD COLLECTORS?

All: Oh, yeah.

BRETT: SO YOU LIKE TO PUT THESE OUT AND KEEP THEM LIMITED, WITH NEAT COVERS AND COLORED VINYL, WHENEVER POSSIBLE?

Barry: Except for the full-length stuff. It's good to have that available all the time.

JEFF: ONLY THE REAL FANATICS WILL PROBABLY END UP GETTING THEM ALL.

Barry: You'd be surprised. A lot of kids do that.
Phil: Sometimes we put out stuff that comes in limited runs, and people just eat that shit up. They have to have everything that we do. It's cool. Speaking as a collector of French bands and British bands, you want to get everything that they put out. It feels good when people have the same attitude about Templars releases.

BRETT: WHAT WAS THE STORY WITH THAT 7" RECORD FROM GERMANY, THE ONE THAT GOT HELD UP IN CUSTOMS?

Phil: Actually it was the "Phase Two" CD. That guy from Dim records was putting out some crazy Nazi-type shit, and the graphics were all the same. So the German government cracked down on the entire label.
Barry: They cracked down on a lot of record labels in Germany, and his was one of them. Plus, he distributes a lot of other stuff, too, such as mail order catalogs.

BRETT: IS HE HIMSELF A NEO-NAZI?

Phil: I don't know anything about that.
Barry: He's got a family and he's got to support himself, so he's probably putting out whatever will make him some money.

JEFF: ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT NAZI SKIN MUSIC, OR OTHER TYPES OF RIGHT-WING BANDS?

Phil: Well, to me there's not much difference between right-wing and Nazi shit.

JEFF: THAT'S NOT NECESSARILY TRUE, BUT WHAT I'M TRYING TO GET AT HERE IS THAT THERE ARE ACTUALLY A LOT OF BANDS THAT WRITE PRO-NAZI LYRICS THAT ARE NOT REALLY OI BANDS AT ALL.

Phil: No, this particular fellow is putting out Oi bands and skin bands.

JEFF: JUST OI BANDS?

Phil: Yeah. And the German government held onto our tapes for a year. And by the time they came out, we already had other stuff like a 10" record coming out.
Barry: We already had two other releases recorded, and all kinds of new stuff on the drawing board. For a while there, we had a new record coming out every three months. People were wondering why, and the reason was because this German release was a year-and-a-half late coming out.

BRETT: TOUCHING ON WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH THAT GERMAN LABEL AND OI MUSIC IN GENERAL, THERE SEEMS TO BE A LOT OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM GOING ON WHICH HAS AFFECTED OI MUSIC AS WELL AS METAL AND VARIOUS OTHER TYPES OF MUSIC. DO YOU FIND THAT PEOPLE WHO ARE INTO THIS SORT OF THING COME TO YOUR SHOWS BECAUSE THEY LIKE YOUR MUSIC, AND THEN ARE SURPRISED TO FIND OUT THAT YOU GUYS AREN'T WHITE POWER SKINS? DO YOU HAVE A LOT OF RUN-INS WITH THAT ELEMENT?

Phil: I think anyone with half a brain cell would realize that the Templars have got some black guys in the band. We played once in Canada, and Nazi skins were taking off their buttons because they wanted to come see us. You can't fight the power of music, it's gonna be good no matter what.

BRETT: THERE ARE A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO HATE NAZIS BUT LOVE SKREWDRIVER, JUST LIKE I'M SURE THERE ARE NAZI SKINS THAT LIKE THE TEMPLARS.

Barry: That's true, we do get fan mail from guys like that. They say "yeah, we're nationalists, but you guys play good music".

JEFF: WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE GENERAL STATE OF THE WHOLE SKINHEAD COUNTERCULTURE THESE DAYS?

Phil: In America or in Europe?

JEFF: IN GENERAL.

Phil: I think it varies in different regions. Skinheads in New York never had a reputation for being Nazis. There were a few oddballs

here and there, but you'd even see those guys talking to a black dude or a Spanish dude. Black skinheads and Spanish skinheads are everywhere, they're like air. How the fuck can they support "white power"? It may be different in upstate New York and more rural areas. You've got places like Omaha, Nebraska, where there are no black dudes in sight, and they think we're a threat, so they support white power. How come they get into white power? There are no black people to hate out there, so why are they like that? I don't know. American skinheads have a lot to fucking learn, I think. A lot to learn. A lot of bands coming out now, it's not like in the old days. We circulated demo tapes and 45s, and then played a few gigs, but these guys get up there and play a set that sounds crappy. They don't know what the fuck they're doing, and yet they expect to put out a full-length CD. In the end they're stuck with a thousand CDs sitting in their fucking basement, and they're fucking bitching about it. Everyone wants to hit it big all of a sudden. But they've gotta pay their dues first.

Barry: That's the real paradox. It's the same way in Europe to a slightly lesser extent, but it's a real paradox that American skinheads are in today. On one hand, the skinhead scene is bigger than it's ever been. On the other, the white power aspect of it has been totally isolated. White power skins have their own scene now; it's totally separate these days.

JEFF: THAT'S ACTUALLY A GOOD THING. THEY USED TO GO TO REGULAR PUNK SHOWS OR OTHER NON RACIST EVENTS AND PURPOSELY TRY TO START BRAWLS AND OTHERWISE "FUCK SHIT UP". NOW THEY GO PRIMARILY TO THEIR OWN SHOWS, BECAUSE THEY'VE CREATED A NEW UNDERGROUND WITHIN THE UNDERGROUND.

BRETT: NOW THEY'VE GOT THEIR OWN ENTERTAINMENT.

Phil: Except when they go to metal shows and terrorize little kids. (laughs)

Barry: Yeah, even though there are more people into the "scene" than ever before, as Phil said they have a lot to learn. They really don't know much about the history of the skinhead subculture. All these kids with short hair and backwards baseball caps...

Phil: And fucking baggy jeans hanging down around their knees...it's kind of pathetic.

Barry: Yeah, with their pants sagging down past their ass, yelling "yo! Skinhead, dude!" And at the same time we have all of these generic bands coming out chanting "Oi! Oi! Oi!, we're skinheads! We love to drink beer!" That kind of stuff. They're not trying to write lyrics that have any depth to them, or to actually communicate with anybody outside of the people they already relate to. It's getting to be a problem. We have so many Oi and punk labels now that almost any band can get together, write a few songs, go into a studio and, all of a sudden, they've got a record out without ever having paid their dues. In a way, I think that process can hurt bands that are really quality bands, since a lot of kids don't know the difference.

JEFF: YEAH, THESE DAYS A SHITLOAD OF 45S COME OUT EVERY MONTH, AND THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEM ARE REALLY GENERIC. SO ANYONE WHO LOVES UNDERGROUND ROCK MUSIC HAS GOT TO WADE THROUGH THIS HUGE, MASS OF SHIT TO GET THEIR HANDS ON THE GOOD STUFF.

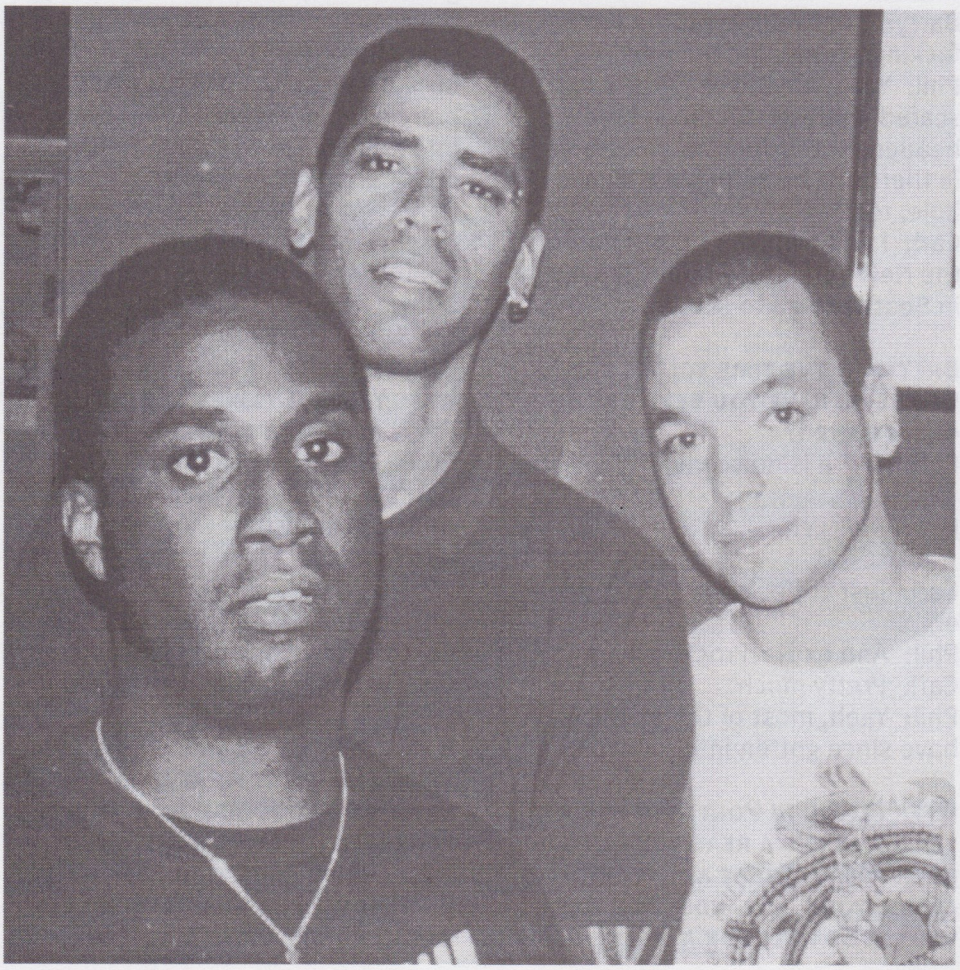
Phil: That's why my own record collecting has kind of slowed a little. I spend more time looking for old stuff than new stuff. Nowadays, something new really has to stand out to attract my attention.

BRETT: IT HAS TO HAVE NAKED WOMEN ON THE COVER, FOR EXAMPLE?

Phil: Yeah, something like that!

JEFF: IT'S DEFINITELY GOTTA HAVE "SOMETHING" GOING FOR IT.

BRETT: IT'S INTERESTING TO BE TALKING TO THREE PEOPLE FROM



THREE WIDELY SEPARATED CITIES AND SCENES. PERHAPS YOU COULD SAY SOMETHING ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR LOCAL SCENES, IN TERMS OF BANDS AND CLUBS. I KNOW NEW YORK HAS HAD A LONG HISTORY OF PUNK AND OI SCENES, ALTHOUGH IT HAS SEEN ITS UPS AND DOWNS OVER THE YEARS.

Phil: Yeah, we're number one, we're number one! New York still has a lot of clubs, although there are not too many Oi shows these days. That's why when we played on the 21st of December, it was the first time in a year and a half! For a while our shows were notorious for having people go crazy fighting each other. But they've stopped that stupid shit, they're starting to lighten up now. We just played a show in front of 350 people, and there was not a single fight. In New York.
Barry: The club was totally packed, elbow-to-elbow.
Phil: The Templars, Oxbood, First Strike, and two other bands played, and there was not one punch thrown.
Barry: The bouncers there were fucking scumbags, though.
Phil: Yeah, whatever. They were scared shitless! All those bald-headed motherfuckers going crazy in there? I'd be acting like an asshole, too!
Carl: I still consider myself part of the New York scene, since I'm only in Seattle to go to school.

BRETT: IN THE TIME YOU'VE SPENT UP THERE, HAVE YOU SEEN ANY GREAT BANDS?
Carl: There is no scene there.

JEFF: REALLY?

Carl: Just coffee shops, drug dealers...
Phil: And ex-Nazi rockabilly guys.
Carl: Pretty much.
Phil: Yeah, most of the ex-Nazis have since gotten into rockabilly.

JEFF: I LIVED IN PORTLAND FOR A YEAR, AND IT'S A REALLY COOL PUNK ROCK TOWN. THERE ARE TONS OF CLUBS, TONS OF BANDS. BUT WHEN I VISITED SEATTLE FOR A WEEKEND, THERE WASN'T ANYTHING GOING ON UP THERE. MAYBE IT WAS JUST A COINCIDENCE, THOUGH.

Carl: There are still punk bands up there, like White Cross, and one of my friends plays in a band there called Flyhead. They're kind of like the MC5.
Phil: Garage rock.
Carl: Yeah. But the swing/rockabilly scene has overwhelmed Seattle. I can't handle that.

JEFF: IT'S BIG HERE, TOO, ALL THAT "LOUNGE" SHIT. THAT STUFF SUCKS SO BAD IT'S EMBARRASSING. IS THAT WHAT'S GOING ON IN SEATTLE AS WELL?
Carl: It's more like rockabilly/swing stuff. Country, too.
BRETT: SO, WHAT'S GOING ON IN CHICAGO?

Barry: To be honest I don't know, and I don't really care! I mean, basically, as far as the skinhead thing goes, New York is my place. I spend all of my spare time there, and the Chicago skinhead scene hasn't been good for over ten years. Nowadays the scene consists mainly of 18-year-old kids with baggy jeans and dirty boots, and older guys that hang around who are either really into politics, or really into being drunk and acting stupid.
Carl: I go up to Vancouver sometimes, since they've got a pretty good scene. They've got the Subway Thugs.

BRETT: THEY'RE A COOL BAND.
JEFF: YEAH. IF I LIVED IN SEATTLE, I'D BE MAKING ROAD TRIPS TO PORTLAND AND VANCOUVER ALL THE TIME, BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE MOST OF THE PUNK MUSIC IS IN THE NORTHWEST.

Phil: To me the best scenes are in Boston, New York, and Washington D.C., with bands like United 121.

JEFF: I WAS LIVING IN D.C. LAST YEAR, AND THERE WERE ONLY A HANDFUL OF GOOD SHOWS. IT WAS GENERALLY LAME AS HELL. MAYBE THERE WERE SOME GOOD SHOWS IN BALTIMORE, AND IN PLACES IN SUBURBAN VIRGINIA AND MARYLAND, BUT LIKE A DUMBSHIT I DIDN'T TAKE MY CAR WITH ME. THERE WAS REALLY ONLY ONE GOOD CLUB, THE BLACK CAT, AND THEY ONLY HAD SHOWS MAYBE ONCE EVERY COUPLE OF WEEKS. D.C. IS NOT REALLY A BIG PUNK ROCK TOWN.

Phil: There's a place outside of D.C. called the Phantasmagoria. We played there. Also, Atlanta's got a real good scene, Phoenix is picking up, Austin, Houston...Some of the best bands out now are the Badskins from Phoenix, the Local Men and the Violent Drunks from California...

JEFF: WHAT ABOUT OUT HERE, MAN?

Barry: And here in California. Northern California.
Phil: Southern California has had a lot of good bands, but they've all broken up. They need to start organizing more new bands down there.

BRETT: WHAT DO YOU FORESEE THE TEMPLARS DOING IN THE NEXT 5-10 YEARS? ARE YOU GOING TO KEEP PUTTING OUT RECORDS? (EVERYONE LAUGHS)

Barry: Yeah, we're going to keep going until...
Phil: Until my motherfucking bass quits.

JEFF: OR UNTIL YOU GET BORED.

Barry: Exactly.

BRETT: DO YOU ENVISION SOME SORT OF A NATURAL MUSICAL PROGRESSION COMING, OR ARE YOU HAPPY WITH EXACTLY THE TYPE OF MUSIC YOU'RE PLAYING NOW? YOU'VE ALREADY SAID THAT IN THE NEW ALBUM, THINGS ARE GETTING MORE COMPLICATED AND MATURE...
JEFF: I HOPE NOT TOO COMPLICATED OR TOO MATURE! (EVERYONE LAUGHS)

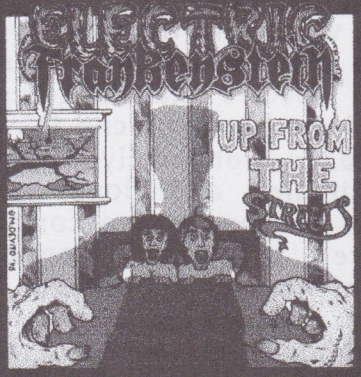
All: No way!
Barry: We're not going to become a progressive rock band or anything! We won't be using an anagram generator, or anything like that.

JEFF: GLAD TO HEAR IT! ⊕

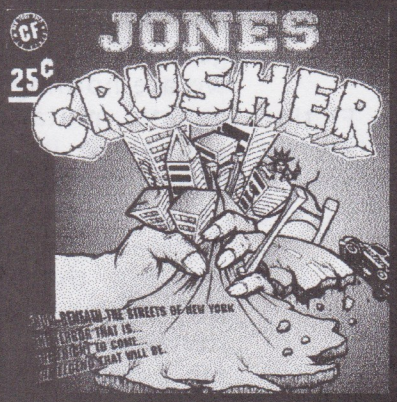
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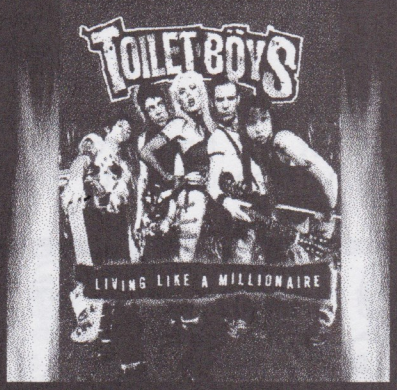
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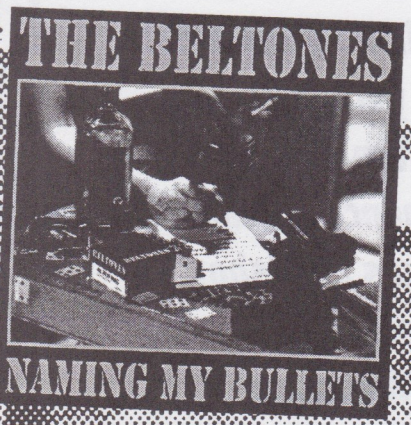
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Dreaming of the Apocalypse

by Frank Kozik

In my youth I was a Science Fiction enthusiast. As time progressed my interest was drawn inexorably to novels with apocalyptic visions. I took strange comfort in stories of the end time, of civilization wiped out, of society and system rendered obsolete. It gave me feeling of control, adventure, excitement...of a return to the frontier...in fact a strange sense of hope. Life moved on and I soon replaced Science Fiction with the supposed reality of the punk rock scene. Hey, our own mini-apocalypse, Mad Max for $5.00 a show with the added bonus of beer and music. In time that comfort faded as well...and with it my favorite possible future...the end of civilization as we know it. Some drab years followed thereafter in my mental landscape and I had to turn to lesser, ultimately unsatisfiyng internal musings to feed the need for the end—video games, military history, ecological tracts, bad girlfriends—but nothing ever quite replaced the thrill of a devastated landscape, free of people, and littered with the rusting hulks of a species gone awry. Because, you know, the truth is that we are nothing but a spectacularly unsuccessful genetic mutation, a species that is going to extinguish itself and its own bioniche in what has to be record time, cosmologically speaking.

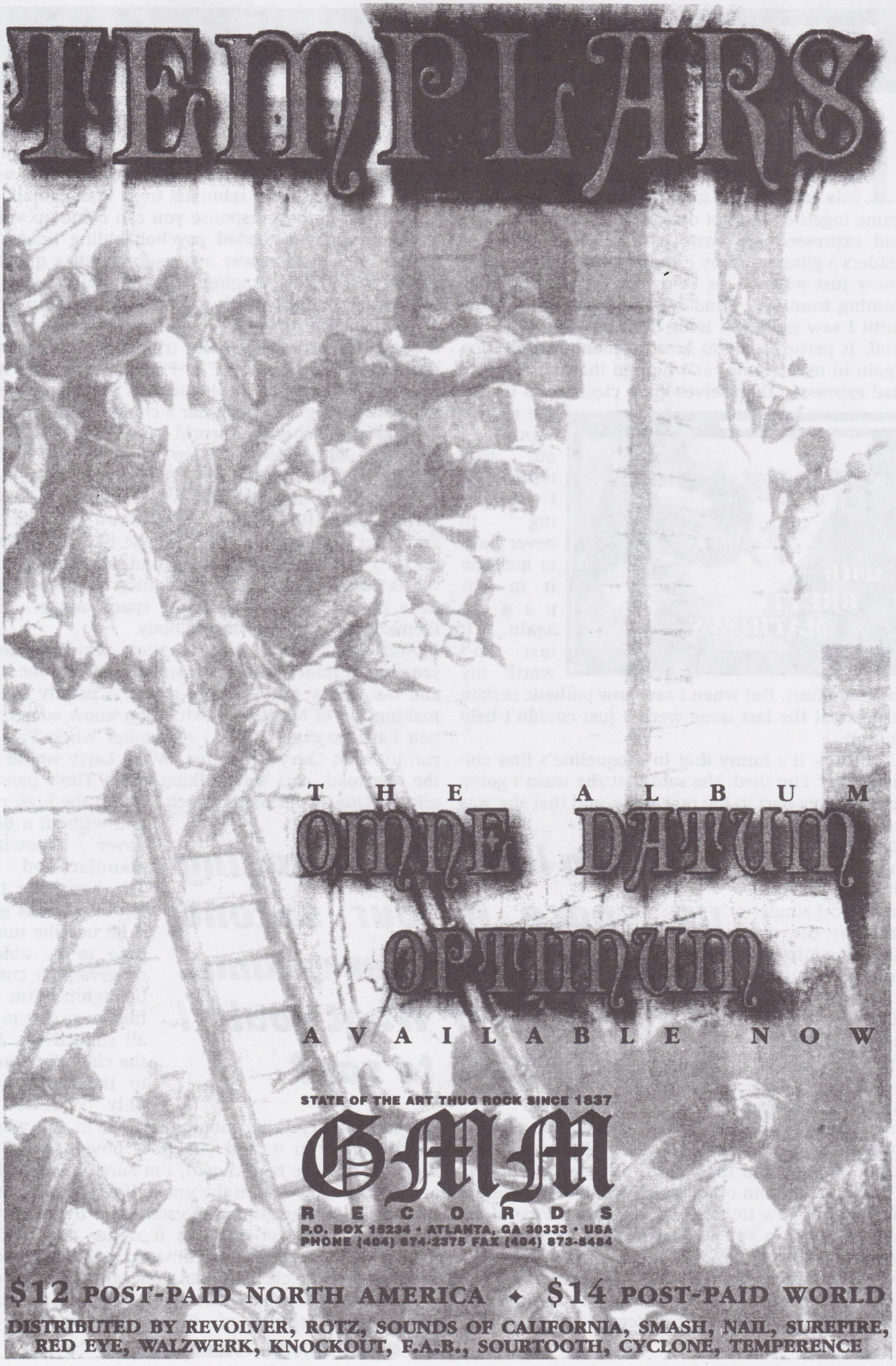


Then came the nineties, and alongside the depressing prison of prosperity and computer worship, the final sterilization of real opportunity which isolation provides...of instant trillionaires and the porn explosion, of more and more people talking about each other and themselves in an ever-tightening sphere of artificially-enhanced flesh. Problem after made-up problem, "crisis" after "crisis", while all the while boring prosperity prevailed. Then, as if a God had actually heard my mental plea, there arose the spectre of the Big One. Not the long anticipated nuclear clusterfuck, nothing nearly as sexy but something infinitely more satisfying, perhaps on account of the sheer blandness of it. A subtle creeping plague, the dust under the carpet of the Palace of Information, Y2K.

I mean,who would have thought that The End would come as a result of some accountant's need to keep costs down. You've got to love it. And now, well it's better than a second childhood. That special tingle is back in the air. And I'm quite happy, you know, assembling lists of supplies, cleaning my guns, musing over generator catalogs. I figure I can get along just fine, for a while at least, and then things are going to get really interesting...say, at Y2K plus 6 months or so. It's all going to go up in a puff of digital smoke...all the Yuppies, all the art school grads, all the fat liberals and the even fatter toupee-sporting Republicans. What a pleasure to finally answer all your silly problems and dilemmas with the ultimate reality check. Man, I can hardly wait.

Kozik's Current top 10:

1. Nation rocked by delusion puppy love
2. Toilet Boys sign big-assed multi-record deal
3. Pets,Pets,Pets
4. Animatronic Gorebot actually has a shot at the big time
5. Bright yellow
6. Cube(film)
7. Resurgence of female trapeze acts
8. Antiques Roadshow
9. Cocksparrer
10. Vice Magazine


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HIT SQUAD



I had no intention of taking up space in our second issue with another column. Why would I? What could I possibly have to say? I was content just making sure that everything came together and got out on time for this issue. I had expressed my basic opinions and gave our readers a glimpse of my mindset so that they would know just where I, as co-owner of this zine, was coming from. My mind was then at ease, at least until I saw the latest issue of *Maximum Rock and Roll*. It perturbs me to have to mention that zine again in my column, as I figured that most people had expressed themselves quite clearly and intelligently about it in our first issue, and I was hoping to never have to mention it in our pages again. It just isn't worth my time or effort. But when I saw how pathetic certain aspects of the last issue were, I just couldn't help myself.

I think it's funny that in Jacqueline's first column after Tim died, she said that she wasn't going to play a big part in the magazine, and that she was just going to let MRR run its natural course. Yet within a year she has almost singlehandedly run the magazine into the ground. She goes to Mordam BUSINESS conventions and complains that people are talking about business (presumably because she had some sort of fucked up interpretation of what Tim was talking about in *MRR* during the years before she came along), and then feels the need to publicly "call out" people from other labels for having different opinions about how to handle their affairs. First of all, Jacqueline, why do you think you have a right to tell other people how to conduct their affairs? Second of all, who made you and your zine the "word of god" in the punk scene to the point where you can stand on your soapbox and shake your underaged finger at people? It's pretty obvious to the public that you are operating with the mindset of a 15-year old when you tell someone to "go choke on shit vomit". Then, when faced with intelligent rebuttals from Frank Kozik and Jami Wolf, the best response you can come up with is to go on some extended psychobabbling tirade that makes no sense, answer a question with a question, and start using disparaging terms like "sweet tits" and "baby doll". I also find it quite ironic that you—once again standing on your illegitimate soapbox—find it necessary to attack Frank for trying to get his records into chain stores (which, as Frank clearly and quite intelligently explains in his letter in the latest *MRR*, is all about giving the consumer a choice on that level so as to keep the corporate world from determining what everyone will and won't listen to), since *MRR* is itself readily available in Borders, Tower, and other magazine chains. I suppose that would make you a hypocrite. (I also find it amazing that you are criticizing Frank for putting out music that he likes, whether or not it's something that you find acceptable for a "punk" label to put out.) Obviously, Frank and Jami have more sense in the empty space between them then you have in your whole body.

And then there is the main item which made me scoot up in front of my keyboard today. The ever clever and o-so gutsy *MRR* decides to run a parody column making fun of Mel Cheplowitz. You know something, you have no class at all. I remember when Tim had run-ins with Larry Livermore. When Larry would take the low road, e.g., start talking about Tim's personal affairs, Tim would pretty much keep to the high road, and without a doubt never knowingly manufactured lies. Tim has to be turning over in his grave if he has the misfortune to be able to observe your current behavior. Tim left this magazine to you all collectively, from the chief coordinator to the person who only reviews one magazine every three months, to run in the way he would have run it, and you have obviously let him down. If only he had known, I'm sure he would have taken *MRR* with him to the grave. If you need to run a magazine into the ground, go start your own shitty little fanzine and get on with it rather than sinking *MRR's* ship. The *MRR* coordinators and directors are apparently so chickenshit that they can't even put their own names on the crap that they write! What's wrong, Bill Florio (editor of *Greedy Bastard*/PO Box

I had no intention of taking up space in our second issue with another column. Why would I? What could I possibly have to say?

BRETTMATHEWS

1014/Yonkers, NY 10704), are you too much of a wuss to openly start rumors and make up lies about people without hiding behind your alias, "Anne R. Key"? Is anyone over there brave enough to sit down at a computer and maliciously manufacture lies about my friend Mel Cheplowitz without doing so anonymously? I remember another group of people from a long time ago that would go around committing abuses for a supposedly higher cause and who would always wear masks and never publicly acknowledge their dirty work: the KKK. Tim must be proud. Don't misunderstand me here—you have the right to say anything you want in your magazine. But there are clever and aggressive ways to make important points, however nastily they're couched (what might be called the "high road"), and then there are vicious personal attacks designed to assassinate someone's character (the "low road"). We will certainly be talking our fair share of shit over here at Hit List, but at least what we write and print generally deals with substantive topics, and all of our columnists at least have the guts to put their names on the top of their columns and their contact addresses at the bottom. Anything less would be cowardly.

Jeff Bale told me that I should shrug the entire matter off, especially since the ham-fisted Mel satire appeared in *MRR*'s "April Fools" issue, but to me there have been nothing but "April Fools" issues since Tim's death. To provide only one example, that was a nice Tilt interview you published last month. You finally managed to interview a band that has something to say, and some kid that doesn't know Tilt from the hole in his head is sitting there grilling them about "corporate" practices that they have no control over. (By the way, do you mind if we borrow your brilliant and classy way to end an interview: " I recorded this interview over a tape with some other stuff on it, and I can't quite make out what the band is saying, so that's the end of the interview"). Once again *MRR* is setting a new standard for quality journalism. Speaking of which, here's another "joke" I'm sure you'll appreciate:

Q: How many *MRR* employees does it take to put out a decent magazine?

A: Obviously more than they have now.

I really can't believe the circus *MRR* has turned into.

I must admit though, I felt comforted having Arwen write us a letter congratulating us on our magazine (with all sorts of sexist and ageist undertones, but I'll let Jeff deal with that in his response to her letter) and welcoming it to the punk scene. Let me give you a little history lesson. TWENTY YEARS AGO JEFF BALE STARTED THE FUCKING MAGAZINE THAT YOU'VE BEEN WORKING AT FOR ONE OR TWO MONTHS. I'M SURE HE REALLY APPRECIATES YOU "WELCOMING" HIM INTO THE ZINE SCENE! Even so, the only "criticism" you came up with (other than the silly characterization of our 200+ record review section as "small") is a reference to our "no diaper" policy, which obviously refers to our policy of not censoring our columnists. Since when is giving your writers the freedom to say what they want to a bad thing? You might want to try it yourself some time. If *MRR* had adopted a similar "no diaper" policy, maybe it would still house most of the columnists that once made *MRR* enjoyable to read. I wonder where they've all gone? Oh, yeah, THEY'RE OVER HERE at *Hit List!* I'm also pretty sure I can figure out why you decided to take it upon yourself to review *Hit List*. I know the two main music zine reviewers that write for *MRR*, and both of them told me privately that they thought Hit List was the best thing they had seen come along in quite some time. Go figure.

I wish for Tim's sake that you would just hang it up. Either perform radical surgery on the staff or fold the magazine and hope that the reputation Tim garnered for it over the last 20 years is strong enough to compensate for what you've recently done.

I wish for Tim's sake that you would just hang it up. Do yourselves a favor and quit before you all further tarnish Tim's memory, not to mention make further jackasses out of yourselves. Either perform radical surgery on the staff, especially the board of directors and the coordinators, some of whom only care about making petty little personal attacks and ideologically manipulating the minds of naive but idealistic 13-15 year old kids, or fold the magazine and hope that the reputation Tim garnered for it over the last 20 years is strong enough to compensate for what you've recently done. That's how MRR should be remembered. ⊕

CONFEDERACY OF SCUM

ONE PERCENTERS OF ROCK N' ROLL

BY JEFF "MC TOOF DK" SKIPSKI

Lookee here, crackas—There were many festivals this past summer, most of which came to your town. I'm not going to name them because most if not all of them were promoting something—feminism, environmentalism, peace on earth, etc. Well big daddy, the only summer festival that didn't care at all about any of the above—if not having a healthy aversion to them—was the fourth annual CONFEDERACY OF SCUM SUPERSHOW held in Lawrence, Kansas over two hot and steamy nights in August. A total of nine bands participated, with enough hair and tattoos to make your mother run for cover.

The meeting place for this year's installment was no fluke. Ya see, charter members COCKNOOSE wanted it to come to them this year, and come to them it did in grand style. The bands represented were from various locales— ANTiSEEN from North Carolina, ZEKE from Washington, HELLSTOMPER from Georgia, LIMECELL and RANCID VAT from Pennsylvania, COCKNOOSE and CRETIN 66 from Kansas, NASHVILLE PUSSY from Tennessee, and a special appearance of CONQUERER WORM from parts unknown. The fans came from miles around—CA, TX, AZ, PA, MN, VA, NH, MA. Hell, one couple from Germany made the trek from the bowels of Bavaria for this event. How the CONFEDERACY OF SCUM came to be...

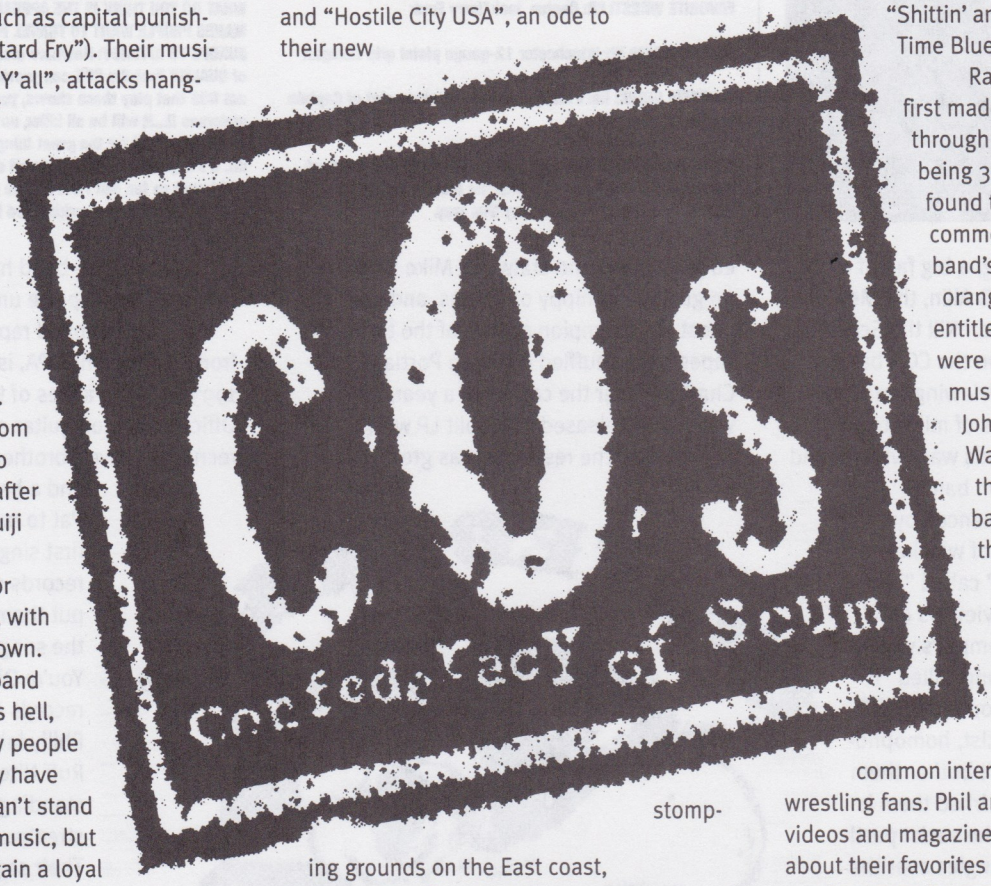
The COS is the brainchild of one Widowmaker, bassist and founder of COCKNOOSE, and of Colonel Vas Deffrens, their manager extrordinaire. It is a collection of bands interested in one thing—bringing real rock 'n' roll to the masses, no frills, and loud as hell!! The bands that comprise the COS at the current time are COCKNOOSE, ANTISEEN, RANCID VAT, HELLSTOMPER, LIMECELL, CONQUERER WORM, and ALCOHOLICS UNANIMOUS, plus a few from selected labels such as BALONEY SHRAPNEL RECORDS and JETTISON RECORDS. Many perceive the COS as a collection of thugs with long hair, tattoos, and a shitty attitude, and that may be true to a certain extent, but most people that have actually had any dealings with them know them to be straight up and friendly as long as they aren't crossed. One other thing to remember, though, is that you cannot JOIN the COS. Like most clubs it's by invitation only, and it's only after you've passed the test that you can be INDUCTED into the COS. 1992: Lawrence, Kansas

Many a night passed in the college town of Lawrence, Kansas, with Widowmaker and the Colonel playing dominoes, all the while discussing a way to put a big boot in the collective ass of the local music scene. They struck upon the idea to form Cocknoose, and recruited fellow rowdy barmates, Commander PP Urino on vocals, Superstar Penis DeMilo on guitar, and "Mad Dog" Link Levay on drums, to bring their plan of domination to fruition. They began practicing on a regular basis, and within a few month's time they had more than enough material to release their first single, "Greatest Band of the 21st Century". With this came offers to open up for touring bands at the famous Outhouse, which is located in the middle of a cornfield, far enough away from the main strip that the cops could not or would not stop the mighty Noose. Shows usually consisted of blood (both that of the band members and that of the audience), violence, verbal insults, and the occasional song or two thrown in for good measure. Highlights included Link's homage to Santeria, the breaking of a live chicken's neck onstage and the sharing of it with the audience. One such opening slot was for the heavyweight champions of rock 'n' roll, ANTISEEN. Upon first meeting, the boys found a common ground in their interests—guns, music, and wrasslin'. After the show, in which Antiseen publicly acknowledged that they didn't want to take the stage after the Noose's blistering set, a bond was formed, and the Confederacy of Scum idea was set into motion. The final step was to find other like-minded bands to take it to the next level.

Antiseen hails from Charlotte, North Carolina, home of the 13-time World Heavyweight Champion Ric Flair, and the proverbial buckle of the "Bible belt". They were formed in 1983 by Jeff Clayton (vocals) and Joe Young (guitar), primarily so that they could open up for touring bands and not have to pay to get into shows. The band was mainly into theatrics early on, as Jeff was a big horror movie fan. The early shows involved fireworks, fake body parts, a wall of noise, and plenty of broken equipment. One patron of a show observed this total annihilation and coined the term "Destructo Rock", which has since become a term that has been widely applied to their music. They released their own singles and toured throughout the southeast, leaving alot of non-invites to play again. Over the years they've had records released in Australia, Japan, Germany, Belgium, and the US, over 50 in all. Antiseen has generated a cult-like status among fans of 3-chord r 'n' r, and have opened up for some of their favorite bands, the Ramones and Motorhead. They've also been to Europe 4 times playing to packed houses, and have made their way across the US a few times. A few major indie labels have offered the ever-coveted contract to Antiseen, but they've opted to stick with smaller labels who do not want to take them to the cleaners over pub-

lishing royalties. Antiseen's songs deal with things they know about, such as living in the South ("Trapped in Dixie"), or things they feel strongly about, such as capital punishment ("Watch the Bastard Fry"). Their musical battlecry "Fuck All Y'all", attacks hangers-on and their ilk. If Antiseen have their way, they'll be around for many more years, long after most alterna-bands have taken up day jobs at McDonalds to repay their signing bonuses.

Enter Rancid Vat from Portland, Oregon, who were formed in 1980 after being inspired by a ouiji board. They've been pounding out noise for close to twenty years, with no signs of slowing down. The idea behind the band was to play as loud as hell, and to annoy as many people as possible. They may have done that, as some can't stand their unique style of music, but they've managed to gain a loyal following over the course of their career. Their live show consists of torturous feedback mixed in with their songs, as well as verbal taunts from the entire band, and those who can't or don't get it usually leave well before the show is over, Rancid Vat's mission accomplished. They've released a number of records, most of them now collectors items, from LPs (including "Stampeding Cattle" and "Burger Belsen", which featured cover artwork by Dennis Worden that generated some heat 'cause some didn't think it was funny to portray a Nazi death camp as a burger joint!), to singles (including "Rulebreakers Rule", a tribute to the world's greatest sport, wrestling, and "Hostile City USA", an ode to their new stomping grounds on the East coast, Philadelphia. Rancid Vat's current lineup consists of co-founders Phil "thee Whiskey Rebel" Irwin on guitars and Marla Vee on bass, the Cosmic Commander on vocals, and Eric Perfect on drums. While not trying to get under people's skin, Phil and Marla also make racket with Rancid Vat's alter ego, Alcoholics Unanimous, a band dedicated exclusively to drinking and drinking songs, and all the rest of the fun that goes with alcoholic beverages. The lineup, as far as singers and drummers, is constantly changing, but their love for all things drinkable does not. Song titles include "Drinking Saved My Life", "Santa Claus DWI", "Booze is the Answer", and the ever-popular "Shittin' and Pukin' at the Same Time Blues".



Rancid Vat and Antiseen first made contact around 1989 through mutual friends. Even being 3000 miles apart, they found that they had alot in common. For example, each band's first album had an orange cover and a song entitled "Death Train". They were both into country music—Hank Williams Sr., Johnny Cash, Porter Wagoner, Ernest Tubb—the list goes on. Both bands had problems with the local religious yahoos, and didn't care too much for the political orations of hardcore bands. And to top it all off, they both shared the common interest of being huge wrestling fans. Phil and Jeff would trade videos and magazines, and swap stories about their favorites and whatnot. They first met in person in 1992, when Antiseen made their first and only complete US tour. A bond was formed between Phil and Jeff, and to this day they regularly attend record and horror conventions up and down the east coast.

The Confederacy of Scum was now in full force, with each band, Antiseen, Rancid Vat, and Cocknoose, swapping each other's records to sell and spreading the word about this new collection of r 'n' r outlaws. Around this time, a zine popped up in Ringold, Georgia, started by a country boy named



NAME: Thee Whiskey Rebel

BAND: RANCID VAT/ALCOHOLICS UNANIMOUS/CONQUERER WORM

FAVORITE WRESTLER: My current fave is Sabu...my all-time fave is Ric Flair

FAVORITE GUN: My temper is too bad and I get suicidal a couple of times a year, so my wife won't let me buy one. If anything happens to her, I'll buy a streetsweeper and take it back to the Satyricon club in Portland, Oregon.

FAVORITE DRINK: A shot of REBEL YELL whiskey chased with a 3.2% cheap corporate beer.

YOUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MUSIC SCENE: As far as punk rock is concerned, 20 years of crooked distributors and an indy label circuit that only issues records and CD's by the handful of familiar "punk oldies" bands have destroyed the American punk scene. I believe there's always alot of great grassroots punk bands at any given point in time, but scene kingpins who dominate the booking process discourage most of them, causing many of them to just quit. If today's fans are so stupid that they believe ska is punk(!!!), they don't deserve any better. Frankly, I'd rather listen to my old country records.

MOST MEMORABLE SHOW, BE IT BIZARRE/SHITTY/GREAT, ETC: The show we played in a Philly suburb that turned into a riot. A bunch of little kids destroyed the interior of the lodge we played at, causing many thousands of dollars' damage.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE APPEAL OF A COS SUPERSHOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM AS FAR AWAY AS EUROPE TO ATTEND?: COS diehard fans are the same twisted people that prefer vicious wrestlers like Abdullah the Butcher and Terry Funk, and hardcore country artists like David Allan Coe and Johnny Paycheck. COS fans KNOW that 99% of the bands they read about in magazines like Hit List are typical, greedy mama's boys who perform the same show night after night. The COS are "the last of the breed", as far as bands that carry on the true spirit of '77-style punk, albeit without blatantly aping the old bands.



NAME: Jeffrey K Clayton, aka the Longhaired Weirdo

BAND: ANTISEEN

FAVORITE WRESTLER: Cactus Jack/Terry Funk

FAVORITE GUN: My Winchester 12-gauge pistol grip shotgun

FAVORITE DRINK: Here lately I've been drinking alot of Captain Morgan spiced rum

YOUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MUSIC SCENE: This is the most disconnected I've ever been with the current music scene. I think it's best that I should stay that way.

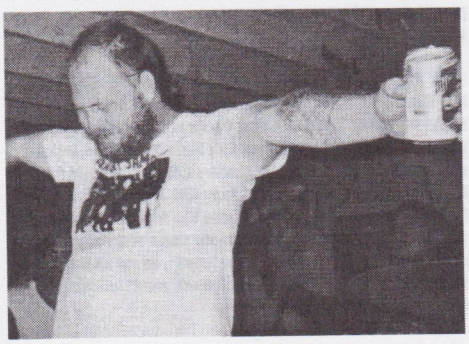
MOST MEMORABLE SHOW, BE IT BIZARRE/SHITTY/GREAT, ETC: Too many to remember alot of them, but we did see a guy get stabbed in front of the stage in Karlsruhe, Germany.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE APPEAL OF A COS SUPERSHOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM AS FAR AWAY AS EUROPE TO ATTEND?: Nowhere else will you get two full nights of QUALITY that the COS can provide. Even the groups who are not COS that play these shows, you can bet that if the COS endorses it...it will be all killer, no filler. Some people realize you gotta travel for the great things in life sometimes, so they do. It's a great compliment to all of us involved that people will travel so far. But I bet no one goes home feeling cheated!!! Take that to the goddamned bank!

Alan "the Goddamn" King, a big fan of all things scum, including GG Allin, the Mentors, and outlaw country music. "Kill the Scene" started having features on the COS bands, interviewing them and reviewing the shows that he traveled hundreds of miles to see. His dedication to the bands was evident, and in 1995 he started his own band, Hellstomper. Heavily influenced by David Allan Coe and lots of whiskey, their first record was a 7" called "The Last Hoedown". A few reviewers didn't take too kindly to Hellstomper's view of the world, what with a song called "If You Ain't from Georgia, You Ain't Shit". They were labelled as racist, homophobic rednecks, which didn't bother them all too much; what really irked them is that their critics left out the sexist part! They've released a few singles over the past few years, one of which featured the song "Berkeley in a Box" (a little ditty about the PC contingent running MRR), and a CD with songs about their love of living in the Southland, Pabst Blue Ribbon beer, not to mention a handful of covers of their favorite country songs.

Conquerer Worm is a strange beast indeed. The idea came about after Phil had traded some records with Jello Biafra, and the parcel included a copy of "The Incredible Simon Stokes and the Black Whip Thrill Band" LP. It was a collection of tales about the biker lifestyle, told in gruesome fashion over the backbeat of a hard-edged 70's r 'n' r. Phil in turn sent Jeff a tape of the LP, and they decided to start a side project covering Simon's songs. Phil recruited fellow Portland stalwarts Mike Schuppe on guitar, Everhippy on drums, and special guest Pig Champion on one of the tracks. Tapes were shuffled between Portland and Charlotte over the course of a year, and it was finally released as a split LP with Cocknoose. The response was great, and a copy of said songs managed to reach the man himself, Simon Stokes, who was alive and well and living in Los Angeles, not dead as previously thought. Simon has become a big fan of the COS, and even made the trip to Lawrence for the '97 Supershow, to sit in with the band on a few songs. The set went off without a hitch, which is surprising, seeing as the whole band had not performed together in one place until that time.

The newest band representing the COS from Philadelphia, PA, is Limecell. Formed in 1993 from the ashes of the Arresting Officers, Bob on guitar and Steve on bass, recruited Steve's brother Kevin on vocals, and a heavy metal kid named Pat to bash the skins. Their first single on Headache records sold out quickly, and put them on the map with the song "You're Not Punk, You're Dirty". Offers to do records came from local Philly labels Black Hole and Ruff Nite, and solidified their standing as a good-time, streetpunk rock 'n' roll band. Their songs range from the funny "Marlboro Miles", an ode to the cigarette give-away, to the shit they see on the streets of Philly, such as "Crack Hooker". They've had opening slots for the Humpers, Electric Frankenstein, Agent Orange, and—the icing on the cake—the Dictators (earlier this year at the Carbon 14 magazine bash). Their attitude can be best summed up in one song, "Drunk Until I Die", which was more than evident the night they were inducted into the COS, when they ended up going through two and a half cases of beer during their 35-minute set. According to the band, the highlight of their career was being accepted by the COS,



NAME: Kevin McCarthy

BAND: LIMECELL

FAVORITE WRESTLER: Bruiser Brody

FAVORITE FIREARM: None, I have too bad a temper to own one.

FAVORITE DRINK: Beer!

YOUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MUSIC SCENE: It sucks rotten leper asshole, except of course for the COS.

MOST MEMORABLE SHOW, BE IT BIZARRE/SHITTY/GREAT, ETC: Most bizarre is the time we played in Newburytown, PA with Violent Society, and the show was attended by nothing but straight-edge kids with X's all over their hands. Our little group of ten sat around drinking beer and smoking cigarettes, and one kid ripped off his shirt and wrote "BEER SUCKS" on his chest with an indelible marker. What a fucking joke!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE APPEAL OF A COS SUPERSHOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM AS FAR AWAY AS EUROPE TO ATTEND? People get the most bang for their buck. Where else can you get this kind of quality entertainment in one place?



NAME: Alan "The Goddam" King

BAND: HELLSTOMPER

FAVORITE WRESTLER: Michael "P.S." Hayes, one third of the greatest tag team to ever hit the mats!

FAVORITE GUN: Mossberg 12-gauge. Why put a little bitty hole in something when you can just as easily blow the everlovin' shit out of it?

FAVORITE DRINK: Any kind I don't have to pay for. If I'm drinking whiskey, any kind of bourbon will do. If I'm drinking beer, of course, I want the Pabst Blue Ribbon. And if I'm havin' to pay, I'll head back across the ridge and pick up a half gallon milk jug of the real thing. White lightin' is alive and well in the Southland.

YOUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MUSIC SCENE: I really couldn't give a shit...

MOST MEMORABLE SHOW, BE IT BIZARRE/SHITTY/GREAT, ETC: The night we brought out this huge dead rooster as part of our grand finale....and made some misplaced hippy boy cry!

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE APPEAL OF A COS SUPERSHOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM AS FAR AWAY AS EUROPE TO ATTEND?: Well, it's not just a show. It's more like an old-fashioned tent revival for those who worship whiskey and rock 'n' roll. In a nutshell-it's the REAL DEAL!

because they had not really set out to do anything more than put out a few tapes and have a good time doing it. CONFEDERACY OF SCUM SUPERSHOW

To tour or not to tour, that is the question. In this day and age, the reality of staging a tour is more dependent on how much money a label is putting up for support or whether your video is in heavy rotation on MTV, as opposed to whether or not your band is any good. The reason COS bands don't tour is simple economics—the average age of these group's members is in the low 30's, and most if not all of them have house and car payments, kids, or their own businesses and hence can't afford to take off time from work, rent a U-Haul, drive across the country, and play to 30 kids on any given night for 4 slices of pizza and gas money. So an idea came to mind. Why not have one big blowout each year with all the bands, their friends, and their fans? 1999 will mark the Supershow's 6th year, and each year it gets bigger and better. The first Supershow was in Charlotte in 1995 with Antiseen, Rancid Vat, and Cocknoose. Over 400 people attended the show, which featured Rancid Vat being escorted off the stage mid set by Charlotte's finest because Cosmo showed "disrespect" towards the owners of the club; Antiseen performed one of their most brutal exploding barbed-wire shows ever, leaving Jeff and another bandmate lacerated. Over the years, with the addition of new bands, the event has grown into a two-night affair with special guests. The 1996 show, dubbed "Rulebreakers Rule", featured Antiseen, Rancid Vat, and the Murder Junkies, plus wrestling matches between bands, with some barbed wire baseball bats thrown in for good measure. 1997 saw Cretin 66, Zeke, and Nashville Pussy open the show, plus a special appearance of Simon Stokes. Close to 40 rooms were rented at one local hotel, most with 5 or 6 out-of-towners, allowing the bands and fans to hang out together. 1998 had Simon back again, along with vacationing German Community of Filth representatives. Nothing But Puke and Born Bavarian opened the show, New Hampshire's Tunnel Rats had a guest slot. The closest thing that comes to mind for this event is Fan Week in Nashville, where fans get to meet their favorite country stars. Who knows what's in store for the COS Supershow 99? The only thing confirmed at this point is that it will be in Philadelphia sometime around the end of summer, so start saving your pennies and procuring your credit cards for this yearly event. YOU WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED!—unless maybe you're a straight edge vegan who's into Jesus or PC politics. For a Baloney Shrapnel Records catalog, send a SASE to PO Box 6504/Phoenix, AZ 85005



NAME: Widowmaker

BAND: COCKNOOSE

FAVORITE WRESTLER: either Ric Flair or Bruiser Brody

FAVORITE FIREARM: Who wants to know?

FAVORITE DRINK: Jim Beam Rye

YOUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MUSIC SCENE: I am not very interested in the current music scene. There are bands here and there that may interest me, but they are few and far between. I do listen to all of the COS bands.

MOST MEMORABLE SHOW, BE IT BIZARRE/SHITTY/GREAT, ETC: They are all memorable in one form or another, be it bad or good. What matters is that the folks who come to see us don't feel like they wasted their hard-earned money on it. I want the people to get their money's worth.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE APPEAL OF A COS SUPERSHOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM AS FAR AWAY AS EUROPE TO ATTEND? The fact that the Confederacy of Scum is almost like a brand name. People know that when the COS label is affixed to something that it has a certain quality. When they can see Antiseen, Rancid Vat, Hellstomper, Limecell, Cocknoose, and friends of ours that we invite to play all in one place, why not? They know that it will be a great time and worth whatever they have to sacrifice to be there. And the fact that people have attended these Supershows from all around the United States and even overseas year after year is an awesome testimonial to that fact.



NAME: Marla Vee, aka Intoxica

BAND: RANCID VAT and ALCOHOLICS UNANIMOUS

FAVORITE WRESTLER: Mick Foley, cuz he can take so much punishment.

FAVORITE FIREARM: I hate guns, but I have a lovely Bowie knife.

FAVORTTE DRINK: Depends on the situation. If I need the kick of caffeine, I'll take a Capt. Morgan and Coke. If I'm in a luxurious mood, I'll take a White Russian. If it's summer, and I need something refreshing, I'll mix up a Gin Rickey.

YOUR TAKE ON THE CURRENT MUSIC SCENE: I ignore most of it. There are a few good bands out there, mainly those that play music without worrying about the scene.

MOST MEMORABLE SHOW, BE IT BIZARRE/SHITTY/GREAT, ETC: I'll never forget when Rancid Vat played in 1982 for the inmates at the Dammasch State Mental Hospital. We watched a guy take a row of folding chairs and smash them systematically against the wall until they made him and us stop.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT THE APPEAL OF A COS SUPERSHOW THAT MAKES PEOPLE WANT TO TRAVEL FROM AS FAR AWAY AS EUROPE TO ATTEND? It's by and for outlaws, people who don't give a fuck if they get "signed". We play hard, fucking rock 'n' roll, it's wild and uninhibited, there's excitement in the air, you never know what's gonna happen next. The fans feel like they're part of the show. Many of them stay at the same motel and party with the bands, everyone has a lot of fun. Fun is hard to come by these days.

HIT SQUAD

LOOK BACK IN ANGER (AND GET IT OVER WITH)



claude bessy

I really wanted to love this book. I really wanted to hate this book. Yes, I really wanted to feel STRONGLY about this book. What do I get? A big fuck-all is what I get. The boy just don't deliver. The boy is pissing around, the boy is wanking, the boy just doesn't write the autobiography that one, knowing his past and his present (more on that later), could reasonably expect. Zero, zilch, and you end up knowing so little more about the whole thing that you might as well have spent the weekend reading about Princess Di's secret dabblings into New Age philosophy. (Did she or didn't she dabble?) There's a blurb on the back of the book, courtesy of *Rolling Stone*, blathering on about "Dickensian roots" and "Joycean color". Quel garbage is this? C'mon, who's fooling who? A writer Lydon ain't, and even his panoply of insults and put-downs is rather limited. Which doesn't mean that the book doesn't intend to be nasty.

Some fifteen years later and he still hasn't forgiven whoever he believes has done him wrong. Malcolm McLaren, of course, and many others. After all this time (fifteen years later—this wasn't spewed out in the anger of the moment) one would expect a slightly mellower (I know, all you punkeroos can't swallow that concept, can you?!)...a slightly mellower perspective to have surfaced on his personal horizon. But not Johnny. Bitch, bitch, bitch. That poor cunt Sid Vicious gets treated to a thorough character assassination, Steve Jones and Paul Cook are regularly dismissed as clowns and puppets (although they are allowed to contribute a little to the book—rather fair on Johnny's part, that), Glen Matlock is repeatedly treated like shit, others are either ignored or belittled, AND Vicious' lover Nancy is methodically dragged through Johnny's steaming piles of dung. The slob WAS probably the sad character she is portrayed as, but as I said...fifteen bloody years later. Let it rest, men.

And, speaking of contributors, there lies one of the BIG weaknesses of the whole thing (my point of view, of course—others might praise it as a welcome dimension to the whole thing): it is randomly sprinkled with paragraphs, whole pages, even an occasional brief chapter courtesy of a highly selective pack of cronies and hangers on. You get your token football hooligan old mate of the Rotten one (for working class credibility, I presume) who's got zero to say; Zandra Rhodes (Zandra Rhodes???), who has even less to say but I suppose makes for a nice balance; another punk musician or two (from the Banshees and the Ants) who say a little; AND...Carolyn Coon, who has a lot to say, most of it very opinionated and VERY idiotic. The woman goes on and on about feminism, which she seems to know a lot about, but which as far as I can see has nothing to do with what we're trying to find out, and also many other subjects about which she knows nothing but yakety yacks on about anyway. My personal fave: "...Situationist politics is merely sloganeering—second-rate sloganeering at that." And blah, blah, blah. As Lydon himself would say: "Silly cow!" One notable exception amongst all these space wasters is Chrissie Hynde, who weighs in with some remarkably bullshit-free comments and recollections. The woman is cool (might even have a go at reading HER book, if she's got one out). Mr. Lydon Senior also gets to contribute, which is sweet but not acutely useful, 'cept for making le Pistol numero uno seem a bit more human I guess.

But what you DON'T get out of the book is what ruins the whole venture. What about PIL? Nothing, or almost. Where's Lydon at now? Nada. Over 300 pages and we're left with remarkably little new information.



But what you DON'T get out of the book is what ruins the whole venture. What about PIL? Nothing, or almost. Where's Lydon at now? Nada. Over 300 pages and we're left with remarkably little new information. I mean it's nice to know that John is now happily married (to some Slit's mum who, yes, contributed her "two cents'" worth) but I'd rather he expanded on the rare teasing statements he lets drop in now and then: "I'm a noise structuralist", he lets us know early on. OK, let's hear more in that vein, please. It's not that the book is dishonest, it's just...well, skimpy. Inadequate. I WANTED MORE. Obviously this wasn't decided upon with definite goals in mind, apart from defusing a few mythical viewpoints, and I would have believed that Time, that great leveller, had pretty much already done that.

Perhaps I ought to leave Rotten (or is it Lydon?) with the last words, here unusually lucid: "...I always hoped I made it completely clear that I was as deeply confused as the next person." Know how you feel, pal, know how you feel. Too bad you didn't try harder to sort out what must be, after all, wonderful youth memories. While I was reading about the Pistols' adventures and misadventures there was, sitting on the corner of my desk, what at the time must have been temptation solidified: a still unread, unperused even, copy of John Cale's very own autobiography, *What's the Welsh for Zen?* (also written with some journalist's help—what's wrong with these music people, needing to hold someone's hand while pouring out their very own soul? Afraid of having a lousy typewriter as your sole companion, you chicken shit babies?) Anyway, this Cale thing was the one book I had almost given up on ever even seeing in print, and was the one book I was DYING to get into. But this was my assignment, and Cale would have to wait. That's duty for you, bub. So, I would say borrow the Rotten book, or buy it third hand, but don't buy it new. Unless you're a fan. In which case I can do nothing for you. Not a fan of the Pistols per se (you could do much worse). Just being a...FAN. Now that's gross. But you guys probably don't care.

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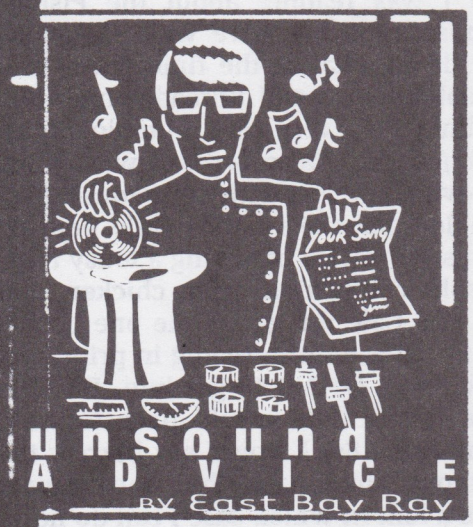
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HIT SQUAD



Hello: I was the guitarist from Dead Kennedys, and the band member mostly responsible for helping the band survive with a D.I.Y. attitude. When we started, I recorded and sold our first single, and during the early years, I continued to do most of the recording and mixing as well as handle the band's business, which I still do today. I set up the Alternative Tentacles record label to get the DK's music released independently. Over the years, I've advised bands and friends about what it takes to get their music out. Much more goes on behind the scenes than the media image that only the fans see.

This column will be in the form of an "advice column", so I urge you to send in interesting questions concerning such things as recording, mixing, mastering, distribution, song publishing, record label agreements, etc., and I'll take a crack at answering them. My column may be about all the boring stuff the music biz doesn't want you to know, but don't be sold on the old romantic myth that you can't be an artist if you know the technical stuff. Yeah, like being dumb is good for you.

There is not going to be much of the "parallel Barney" here: you know, a purple dinosaur saying "I hate you, you hate me." Though it can be good entertainment, not everyone thinks that deliberate intolerance is a sign of intelligent, discriminating thinking. Things will be kept short and to the point, since at least some of our readers probably have a life. And think about all the trees that can be saved!

(Aside to Russell—Freddie and the Dreamers over Herman's Hermits. They were more interesting looking (i.e., not pretty), and had their own groovy dance. And they didn't do that "Mrs.. Brown" song.)

Technical Tidbit: When recording, think about moving the microphone a little bit one way or the other before adding EQ. The sound will retain much more impact during the subsequent steps on the way to someone's crummy stereo. ⊕

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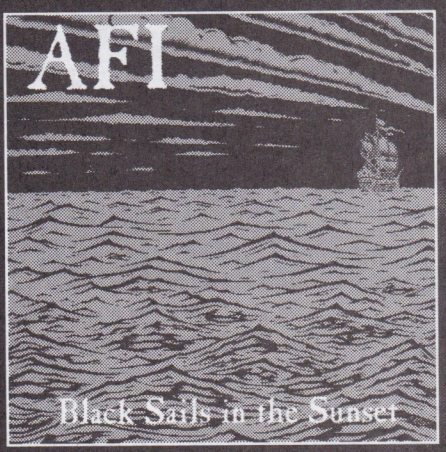
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THE FUTURE OF PUNK?

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TELL US A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND, E.G., RELEVANT THINGS ABOUT YOUR CHILDHOOD, HOW YOU GOT INTO THE R&R BANDS YOU'VE BEEN IN, HOW AND WHEN YOU FIRST GOT INTO PUNK, ETC. RUMOR HAS IT THAT YOU WERE IN SOME CHEESE METAL BAND BEFORE YOU GOT INTO PUNK. FEEL FREE TO ELABORATE.

I grew up dancing around the house to James Brown. He was my mom's favorite. Then at age 13, along came the "Punk Rock Explosion."

Needless to say, I got into it then, and have been into it ever since. It must be my short attention span or something. (ha ha) Some of my early favorites were the Ramones, the Jam, the Runaways, the Dead Boys, and the Clash. When I was around 21 I got into the metal "new wave" via Saxxon, Motorhead, Iron Maiden, Venom, etc. I still love all that shit to this day. And, yes, I am the infamous Katon from Hirax. If I could still sing now like I could then, the 'reunion tour' would be on!

HOW DID YOU END UP HAVING SUCH IMPECCABLE TASTE IN PUNK MUSIC (SINCE AS FAR AS WE'RE CONCERNED, THE BANDS ON YOUR LABEL ARE AMONG THE BEST CURRENT PUNK BANDS)?

Thanks for being so kind. And for the few people that do buy our records, thanks for being the losers that you are. Without all you guys, I wouldn't have a family to call my own. Anyway, the music we put out has the hard edges of my youth. As I mentioned before: the Ramones, the New York Dolls, the Dead Boys, the Clash, and on and on.

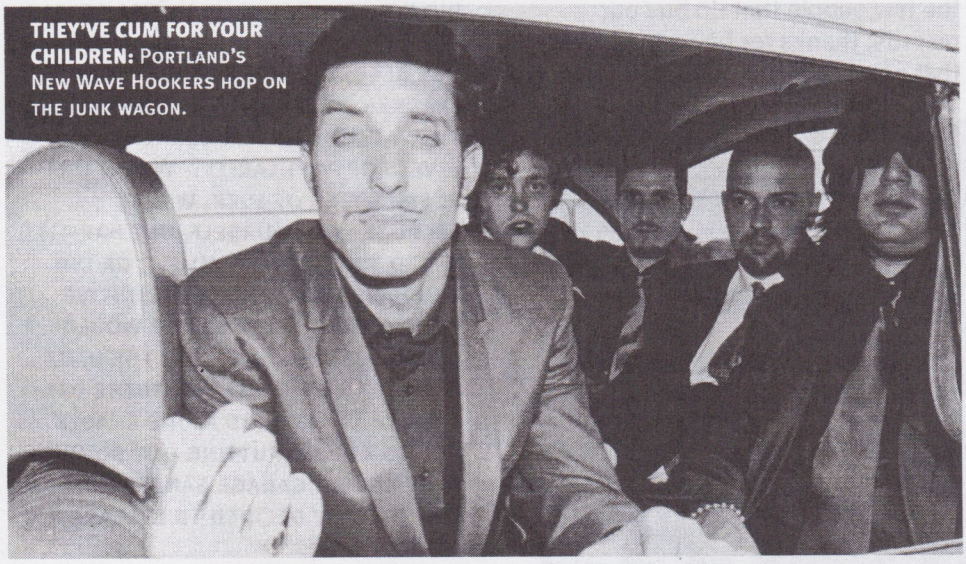


LIVING LIKE A MILLIONAIRE: (BELOW) KATON HANGS WITH PORN STARS AT A SOCAL JUNK EVENT. (BOTTOM) THE FABULOUS BAND WITH THE FUNNY NAME, AUSTIN'S RIVER CITY RAPISTS

WHAT PROMPTED YOU TO START YOUR OWN RECORD LABEL, AND HOW DID YOU FINANCE YOUR INITIAL RELEASES? HOW DID IT HAPPEN THAT YOU PUT OUT RECORDS BY ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN AND ZEKE LONG BEFORE THEY ATTAINED THEIR CURRENT LEVELS OF POPULARITY? WAS IT SIMPLY A MATTER OF LUCK, WAS IT BECAUSE YOU YOURSELF JUST HAPPENED TO LIKE THEIR MUSIC, OR DID YOU HAVE SOME SORT OF INTUITIVE FEELING THAT THESE BANDS WOULD LATER BECOME HUGE? DID THE UNEXPECTEDLY BRISK SALES OF THESE PARTICULAR 7" RECORDS ALONE ENABLE YOU TO AFFORD PUTTING OUT SO MANY OTHER GREAT GARAGE BANDS, OR HAD YOU ALREADY DECIDED TO RELEASE A LOT MORE 45'S?

I started the label because I wasn't happy with the state of punk rock music. There was a lot of stale shit being put out, and I decided that I would do my part to help change that. To this day it is still a struggle to come up with enough money to finance studio recording time for the bands. But we always manage to pull the money out of our asses somehow. We stumbled across E.F. and Zeke in the same way that we did the other bands we are currently putting out. We believed in their music and thought they really kicked ass, and still do to this day. To be quite honest, selling just 7" records isn't a huge money-making venture. And unfortunately, in the real world things cost money, sometimes lots of it. Hence our initial sales didn't make us enough dough to build up the "Junk empire", as it has come to be known today. Junk Records was very fortunate to catch the eye of Bryan

(Dexter) Holland from the Offspring. He offered us a manufacturing and distribution deal through his Nitro Records label. We are very grateful for the opportunities that this deal has provided for us. And our goal is to one day outsell Nitro. (ha ha ha)! We are very proud of our Nitro Records affiliation, even though certain lame-ass "politically correct[?]" punk rags such as MRR have ostracized us for this arrangement.



THEY'VE CUM FOR YOUR CHILDREN: PORTLAND'S NEW WAVE HOOKERS HOP ON THE JUNK WAGON.

HOW DID YOU HOOK UP WITH SO DAMNED MANY GOOD BANDS, RANGING FROM HIGH PROFILE GROUPS SUCH AS THE HUMPERS AND THE CANDY SNATCHERS TO LESSER KNOWN BUT QUALITY GARAGE PUNK BANDS SUCH AS THE STALLIONS AND THE WEAKLINGS?

Well basically, drinking attracts drinkers. Booze, drugs, whores, and crossdressing is what all of our bands do best. The Junk philosophy is quite simple: "If don't live the R&R, you can't play the R&R."

INITIALLY JUNK RECORDS WAS AN UNDERGROUND LABEL IN THE TRUEST SENSE OF THE WORD. MORE RECENTLY YOU'VE MANAGED TO ESTABLISH A COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH NITRO, A MUCH LARGER ENTITY. HOW HAS THIS AFFECTED JUNK?

It's allowed us to put out some great fucking records, for starters. Also, it has helped us get our shit together as professionals trying to get work done. For instance, we now stop drinking at 2AM rather than 6AM. We finally figured out that if we want to stick around, we had to get our shit together like a real record label. Ya know, to step up to the plate, as it were. This relationship has not only allowed us to do so, but has made it necessary. Nitro has given us a free rein to choose the bands that we want to put out. Our respective rosters are as different as night and day, but it's all solid music, and it WILL knock the shit off your mother's combat boots!

HOW DID THE RECENT JUNK SHOWCASE TOUR GO? WE HAD A BLAST HERE AT THE SHOW IN SF, BUT WERE NATURALLY CURIOUS ABOUT HOW THE OTHER GIGS WENT. PERSONALLY, WE HOPE THAT MANY CLUB OWNERS WERE SHOCKED AND THAT MANY OVERSENSITIVE WUSSES IN THE AUDIENCE WERE OFFENDED BY THE "OFF-COLOR" HUMOR AND THE TRASHED-OUT AESTHETICS OF JUNK'S STABLE OF BANDS.

Yeah, the SF show was great. We are like the "Elephant Man" of punk. After a while people kind of get used to us, then we don't have to pay as much attention to the horrified stares that those less fortunate characters who have led such sheltered existences direct our way. Ringling Brothers ain't got nothing on us. We have more "showcases" planned for this year. Most of our "showcase" bands are in the studio right now—a code word for rehab!—so we're thinkin' it will be a few months before they're good to go.

ON THE ROCKIN' "GOIN AFTER PUSSY" JUNK COMPILATION CD, THERE ARE SOME HILARIOUS RECORDED MESSAGES, PRESUMABLY CULLED FROM THOSE LEFT ON YOUR OWN ANSWERING MACHINE. ONE GETS THE IMPRESSION THAT YOU'RE A WILD MOTHERFUCKER WITH A CHAOTIC AND CRAZY LIFE. IS THIS IMPRESSION JUSTIFIED, OR ARE THOSE MESSAGES MISLEADING? ARE YOU AS "OUT OF CONTROL" AS YOU SEEM, OR IS ALL THAT JUST A POSE?

Oh yes, every single one of those messages is for real. And to address the rest of your question, let me just say this: I don't have a fireplace, I don't like lame-ass synthesizers, I don't like acoustic guitars, and I don't like long walks on the beach.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS FOR JUNK, IN TERMS OF UPCOMING RELEASES AND GIGS?

Just to sell enough records to be rolling in big-ass profits by nextyear. To find out what we've got coming up for 1999, check our website out at: www.junkrecords.com. There will be updates and insults a-plenty on it.As far as gigs go, we're working with booking agents to get our bands out on the road. The Weaklings tour the most out of all of our bands. They're everywhere. So keep an eye on the local newspaper to find out when they're playing in your town. The New Wave Hookers have a new tour coming up, too. The best thing to do is to go to the web site, and take a look at the "Tours" page. We post all of our band's tour dates as soon as they get

I don't have a fireplace, I don't like lame-ass synthesizers, I don't like acoustic guitars, and I don't like long walks on the beach.

them to us.

WE'VE RECENTLY LEARNED THAT YOU'VE OPENED A NEW PUNK & ROLL CLUB IN LONG BEACH, ONE THAT FEATURES REAL GARAGE PUNK BANDS AS OPPOSED TO "PROFESSIONAL PUNK" AND HARDCORE BANDS. HOW DID THIS PROJECT GET OFF THE GROUND, AND WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS FOR IT? (WE PLAN TO COME DOWN AND CRASH ONE OF YOUR GIGS IN THE NEAR FUTURE, SO DON'T BE TOO SURPRISED IF WE END UP DRINKING ALL YOUR BOOZE AND PASSING OUT ON YOUR DOORSTEP.)

My doorstep is your doorstep. Anyway, I needed to generate some more income to put into the record label for recording costs, etc., and this seemed to be the perfect route to follow. Plus our bands can play at the club whenever they pass through town, so it was your basic "I can't lose" situation. Me and Alex Hernandez, a local club promoter and barfly—hence the name Barfly Entertainment—therefore got together. We wanted to take control of the pathetic direction that local promoters were taking the Long Beach music scene. Our shows are cheap, and so are the women who attend them! *[Ed.—that sounds like my kind of place]* Our goals for the club are to continue to bring great punk R&R to Long Beach, and to feature bands that the lame local promoters have bypassed so that they can put on their candy-assed, lollipop shows. We pretty much do our shows at two clubs now, the Foothill and Que Sera. We used to do our shows at a place called Java Lanes, but we decided to move on from there. In the three months that we've had the club going, we have put on shows with Zeke, the Swingin' Utters, Rocket From The Crypt, and tons of smaller acts. Coming up we've got the Vibrators from England, a shitload of great unsigned bands, plus some BIG stuff that we are unable to discuss at this time. The Barfly Entertainment booking information numbers are: (562) 621-0665 ph; (562) 438-6818 ph; and (562) 856-5651 fax. If any bands out there want to roll in the LBC, give us a call.

PLEASE PROVIDE OUR READERS WITH A PROFILE OF SOME OF THE CURRENT BANDS FEATURED ON JUNK. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THEM, WHAT KIND OF ASSHOLES ARE THEY, AND WHAT HAS IT BEEN LIKE TO WORK WITH THEM? ARE THEY REALLY THE OBNOXIOUS AND ROWDY DRUNK PUNKS THAT THEY SEEM TO BE? WHAT RECENTLY HAPPENED BETWEEN THE DRAGONS AND THE BULEMICS AND THEIR BOOKING AGENCY?



PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A METAL WARRIOR OF THE APOCALYPSE: KATON, LEFT, LIVING IN A METAL DAZE WITH HIS BANDMATES IN HIRAX

In no particular order we've got:

The Weaklings, a sleazy, drunk, bloody, unstoppable rock-n-roll monster from Portland, OR, with all the scars and broken gear to prove it. They're constantly leaving to do dates anywhere and everywhere all over the US. Upon the release of their next full-length album on Junk Records (due May 1999), the Weaklings will be spending the rest of the year touring Japan in late spring, the States on and off all summer, and Europe in the new millennium.

Also from Portland are the New Wave Hookers, cut from the same stone as the New York Dolls and Iggy Pop. This is the band strippers love to fuck. They've got some new releases coming out this year, too, including a single and a full-length album. They are currently setting up the final dates for a west coast tour. Check our website for details.

The Dragons. For the last several years The Dragons have had the San Diego music scene bent over their knees, and have been giving them what they want and what they most need, burning raw power. They are punks with roots that can be traced back to the legendary (1977) Zeros. Having generated nightmares for motel managers everywhere, these guys have one of the best live acts out there. The Dragons are working on a new album which will also be released later this year.

Shooting (literally) over to Austin, TX we've got the funnest guys in rock, the Bulemics, a self destructive train wreck of a band. Watch your head, because throwing bottles at the stage is a form of band appreciation for Texas crowds, and the Bulemics have received an ample share of such flattery. Their new album, "Old Enough To Know Better", is just about to hit the streets on March 23rd. So go buy it!!

Also from Austin, TX come the River City Rapists, who are full of piss, vinegar, and controversy and feature ex-members of the Didjits and the Motards. Remember that buddy of yours that your other friends fucking hated? The guy who you stuck up for, got dates for, and bought drinks for, even though no one could figure out what the fuck you were doing letting this fucking loser hang out with you? Well, we'd like to introduce you to five of those same guys. Guys that we guarantee you'll fucking hate just based on their name alone. The River City Rapists have a new album coming out in May of this year, which is entitled "Love Hurts." It's filled to the brim with disturbing imagery, and ass-kicking toons.



LOU OF JUNK, KEEPIN' IT REAL ON THE MIKE.

We've recently picked up RC5 out of Seattle, as well, and there are always new members being added to the Junk family. Check out the website under "new releases" for updates on what we are up to.

Our bands are a fabulous disaster, especially on the road. We've even dedicated a special page on our web site to that subject, which is called "Trouble." The title alone should say it all. All we can say about our last booking agent is that we didn't mean to scare her. We're like a car wreck. You don't want to look, but you have to.

HOW COME WE HAVEN'T SEEN ANY JUNK ADS IN *MRR* LATELY? WE THOUGHT "THE FUTURE OF PUNK WAS NOW MOTHERFUCKER", BUT YOU SEEM TO HAVE BEEN BANNED FROM THE PUNK ROCK "BIBLE."

Allow us to clarify this situation.

1. First, I hate giving publicity and my hard-earned advertising dollar to a magazine that doesn't support the kind of (good) music we put out.

2. I think it's sad that the young kids and old farts like me who consider MRR to be the "the Bible", as you put it, don't realize how much phony bullshit goes on at the MRR roundtable discussions prior to each issue. Stuff like:

a. Deciding which bands that they were slobbering over last issue have started making some money or are otherwise "selling out", and hence now need to be slammed. The Offspring, NOFX, and Face To Face are a few of the many victims of this practice, which proves that *MRR* can't make or break anyone.

b. Claiming they won't get sucked into the major labels by running their ads, but then actually running their ads. To name only a few: Royalty Records (owned by Puff Daddy, aka Bad Boy Entertainment, only the biggest hip hop label in the world); NG Records (a multimillion dollar company); One Foot Records (owned by the son of Naxos Entertainment, the biggest classical and jazz label in Europe and the world.); and Adeline Records (owned by Billie Joe of Green Day). These are just a few examples. It is painfully clear that the nincompoops from *MRR* don't do their homework. And I'll tell you what, Fat Mike's money (Fat Wreck Chords) is just as green as Dexter Holland's (Nitro Records). Fat is all over that rag, yet Nitro is supposedly "a major label" and has been denied.

c. Filling their "Legends of Punk" section with bands like the Sex Pistols, the Ramones, the Damned, and many others which—you guessed it—were on 'major' labels.

3. Don't get me wrong. We're "down" with all the people that they "let" advertise, like Fat Wreck Chords for instance. Our position here is not based on opposition to them at all. What we're opposed to are the cock-eyed, screwball politics of the *MRR* staff and their pin-the-tail-on-the-donkey way of singling out certain labels that they consider to be too highbrow and too well-connected for their publication.

Thanks for giving us the opportunity to voice our opinion on the MRR matter. We realize that it is ours alone, and most people just don't get it yet...but they will. In the meantime we'd like to give a big "fuck you" to the MRR staff, their families, their girlfriends, their boyfriends, and their pets too.

Finally, I would personally like to take a moment to thank all the people that are responsible for making Junk happen, including "the General" (Nancy), Louie, and Pete; Bryan Holland and the staff down at the Nitro office; and my partner at Barfly Entertainment, Alex Hernandez.

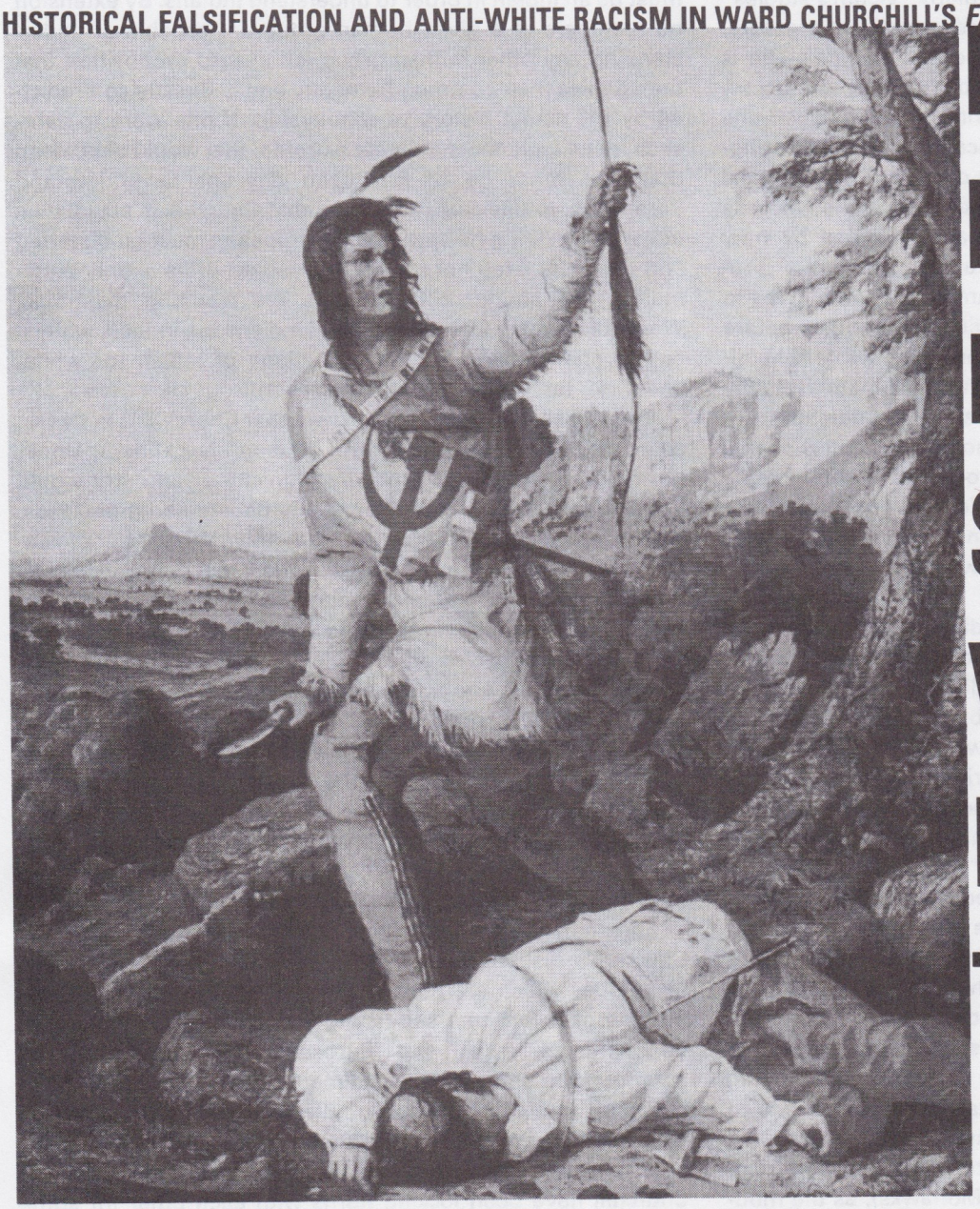
Please send your sister's underwear to us at the following address:

Junk Records
P.O. Box 1474
Cypress, CA 90630

And don't forget to check out our website: www.junkrecords.com

In the meantime, see you at the bar... ⊕

HISTORICAL FALSIFICATION AND ANTI-WHITE RACISM IN WARD CHURCHILL'S *FANTASIES OF THE MASTER RACE*



PALE-FACED RED SPEAKS WITH FORKED TONGUE

by BOB BLACK

Twenty years ago a radical supporter of the American Indian Movement (AIM), Ward Churchill, co-authored a book with Jim Vander Wall entitled *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement* (Boston: South End, 1988). Although employing a Marxist analytical framework that had little apparent relevance to the subject at hand and containing a few factual distortions and exaggerations, this book was an excellent study—based primarily on government documents obtained via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), as well as eyewitness testimony and other sources—of the covert campaigns launched by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and other federal and state agencies against AIM and the BPP. Some of the information the authors' provided regarding covert techniques of state infiltration, manipulation, and repression proved to be so valuable that I myself often recommended sections of the book to academic colleagues, students, and other parapolitical researchers who had an interest in such matters. This volume was in turn followed by a companion volume, entitled *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Dissent in the United States* (Boston: South End, 1990), which contained a select corpus of government documents that substantiated or illuminated many of the controversial claims made in the preceding volume. This too was of considerable utility.

Since then, Churchill has unfortunately been churning out an ever-growing list of tendentious and polemical publications. In place of serious empirical research he now relies increasingly on shrill polemics and personalized attacks in order to advance his own extremist political agenda—an odious mixture of the crudest elements of Marxism and the worst features

of racial nationalist "identity politics"—and in the process feather his own nest. Having become a professor of American Indian Studies and Communications in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of Colorado—without, as is all too often the case in these pseudo-scholarly "victim's studies" programs created primarily in response to political pressure, having acquired a Ph.D. through the normal channels—he is now using his academic position as a bully pulpit to indoctrinate his students and intimidate his critics. Indeed, when one examines his recent book-length publications, one increasingly finds them to be little more than a collection of polemical essays fired off in response to anyone and everyone who has the temerity to suggest that the romanticized and by now orthodox interpretation promoted by radical "indigenist" propagandists like himself—that Native Americans were living in harmony with nature and at peace with one another before those intrinsically evil Europeans arrived in the western hemisphere to exterminate and enslave them—is both factually inaccurate and morally simplistic. These days Churchill's primary modus operandi is to label all non-Indian critics of this bogus new orthodoxy as "racist", "Eurocentric", "anti-Indian", or perpetrators of "cultural genocide". Indian critics are instead characterized as "nickel Indians", "apples"—persons who are "red" on the outside and "white" on the inside—agents provocateur, or outright frauds.

Nor, alas, are critics of Churchill's radical and blatantly racist views the only people who are subjected to such abusive treatment. He dispenses the same "medicine" to whites who romanticize Indians, whites who seek to appropriate aspects of the Indian spiritual tradition for their own silly or opportunistic purposes, and whites whose only "crime" is to portray the human dimensions of the interaction between Europeans and Indians in a complex, nuanced fashion rather than as a Manichean struggle between "evil" (rapacious, sadistic Europeans) and "good" (morally righteous and noble Indians). His criticisms of New Age con artists purporting to explain "Indian" spirituality (such as Carlos Castaneda) and of hand-wringing whites who seek to expiate their imagined collective guilt by romanticizing the Indians (such as Kevin Costner in "Dances With Wolves") are in most respects warranted (though such jackasses can hardly be said to be committing "cultural genocide, as Churchill insists), but his attempts to portray "The Black Robe", a beautiful and highly sophisticated film which depicts the Indians both sympathetically and tragically (except for one group of warlike Mohawks), as the modern-day equivalent of a film produced by the Nazi Propaganda Ministry is not only blatantly false but embarrassingly ridiculous. Sadly, such "Nazi-baiting" has become Churchill's stock in trade. To provide only a few examples, Ayn Rand is described as a "grossly individualistic cryptofascist" (which, incidentally, reveals that Churchill hasn't the slightest understanding of fascism); Allan van Gestel uses "Hitlerian" arguments in his article in *The Invented Indian: Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* (New York: Transaction, 1990), an anthology highly critical of the politically-motivated distortions of people like Churchill; and James A. Clifton, the editor of the aforementioned volume, is compared to Holocaust denier Arthur D. Butz.

Churchill's basic view seems to be that non-Indians—except perhaps those who uncritically accept everything he himself says—can never truly understand, much less accurately evaluate or describe, Native Americans. Only Indians themselves—or, to be more precise, Indians who subscribe to Churchill's racist diatribes—can be expected to do so. In essence, one must be an Indian in order to understand Indians. By extension no members of a given human group are capable of understanding any other human group, an absurd proposition that both denies their common humanity and is directly contradicted by the actual history of scholarship. If one were to carry such inane logic to its ultimate extreme, this would also mean that one must be of European descent to understand Europeans. In this case, assuming that Churchill is actually an Indian, everything he says about Europeans must be distorted and therefore need not be taken seriously. (If he is only partly Indian, one shudders to imagine the resulting dilemmas. Would his level of understanding of Indians [or, indeed, whites] correspond precisely to his percentage of Indian [or white] ancestry? Talk about "racist fantasies"!)

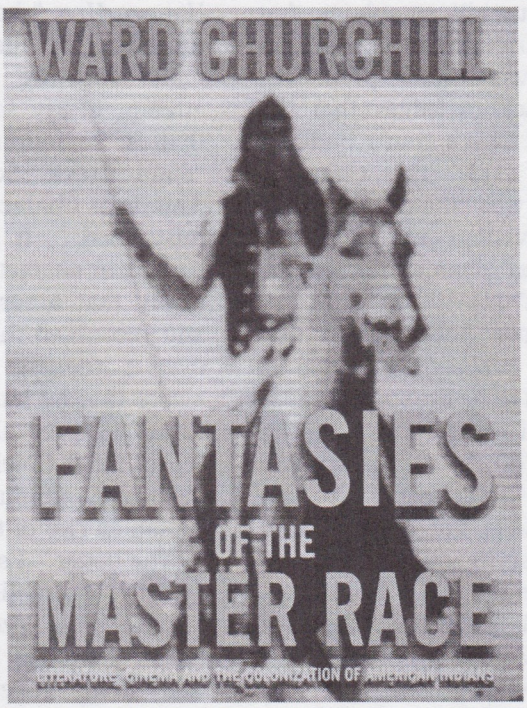
This raises one final question, whether Churchill is in fact an actual Indian (however the term "Indian" is defined). Under normal circumstances Churchill's ethnicity or ancestry would have no relevance whatsoever to any debate about his ideas, but Churchill himself has made it not only relevant but of central importance. Not only does he suggest that only Indians can understand and fairly depict Indians, but he also regularly and savagely attacks other individuals with dubious pedigrees who try to pass themselves off as Indians, accusing them of being "plastic Indians" who are "perfecting a system of self-validation in which all semblance of honesty and accuracy are lost." Perhaps this is a case of the pot calling the kettle black. On top of that, he seems to think that he himself is the principal and most authentic contemporary spokesman for "indigenist" causes. Such a haughty attitude cannot help but invite scrutiny of his own ethnic and racial background, and as will become clear this remains very much in doubt.

Fortunately, not everyone has been intimidated by Churchill's dishonest techniques of dealing with his critics, techniques which are nowadays regularly employed by both "racists of color" and self-hating whites. By labelling all his opponents as "racist" and "Eurocentric", Churchill is in fact attempting to short-circuit legitimate debate about the issues raised by his own polemics. Bob Black is one of the few people who has had the nerve to publicly question Churchill's basic political assumptions and scholarly credentials. Indeed, he and Churchill have been locking horns with each other for some time, and it must be acknowledged that their dispute has not infrequently descended to the level of personal invective, especially in the pages of *Anarchy* magazine. Churchill has predictably accused Black of being a "racist", and Black has responded by saying that he has seen "more authentic Indians standing very, very still in front of cigar stores." In the article below, however, Black concentrates on specific examples of historical falsification and Euro-bashing in Churchill's recent anthology, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema, and the Colonization of American Indians* (San Francisco: City Lights, 1998), and in the process sheds light on Churchill's radical past and present day political agenda. It is up to you, dear reader, to weigh the merits of his arguments for yourself.

Jeff Bale

INTRODUCTION

In Fantasies of the Master Race[1], a collection of essays and reviews, Professor Ward Churchill[2] purports to discuss "Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of American Indians" – that being the book's subtitle. Most of the texts declaim against depictions of Indians in fiction or films which Churchill considers, sometimes correctly, to be deceptive or demeaning. Had he left it at that, this book would have made a minor, if flawed, contribution to separating fact from fantasy in the way pop culture represents the Indians.



Unfortunately, Churchill has a more ambitious agenda. A self-proclaimed "indigenist" ideologue[3], he is out to institute *apartheid* in the United states, with approximately one-third of the lower 48 states to be turned over to the less than two million Indians who make up less than one per cent of the American population[4]. Churchill, to whom the forced relocation of 17,500 Navajos would be an act of genocide,[5] and who is appalled that 55% of the Cherokees perished on the Trail of Tears,[6] thus calls for the dispossession of at least 20 million people in a holocaust on a scale not seen on this continent since Cortez landed. Harsh retribution indeed for ethnic stereotyping!

Churchill cheapens the word genocide by applying it indiscriminately to everything from massacres to missionization, from extermination to education. Mel Brooks and George Armstrong Custer are twins to him. Kevin Costner is just a more insidious Andrew Jackson. To teach an Indian to read is the moral equivalent of killing him. In her introduction, Churchill's editor (and former girl friend) M. Annette Jaimes quotes his longtime ally Russell Means: "If our culture is dissolved, Indian people as such will cease to exist. By definition, the causing of any culture to cease to exist is an act of genocide. That's a matter of international law; look it up in the 1948 Genocide Convention" (1).

So I looked it up:

"In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or social group, as such:

a) Killing members of the group;
b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."[7]

Cultural assimilation was deliberately excluded from the Convention's definition of genocide.[8] And Churchill admitted this in an article first published six years before *Fantasies of the Master Race!*[9] Indeed, international law subordinates indigenous and tribal peoples to the paramount power of the nation-states in which they live, with the objective of their eventual assimilation into the national societies.[10] A proposed Draft Universal Declaration on Indigenous Rights would secure indigenous peoples against genocide and "ethnicide" (forced assimilation)[11] – reaffirming, by implication, the difference between the two. Look it up.

A little pedantry is better than a lot of libel. Whatever else might be said against John Ford's Westerns, Tony Hillerman's mysteries, and the New Age hokum of Sun Bear or Carlos Casteneda, they are just *not* genocide. Conceivably their disinformation might be so deleterious that it promoted genocide, but even a writer as reckless as Churchill does not even try to show this.

If non-Indian Americans are engaged in genocide, they're not very good at it. Although it outnumbers the vanquished by more than 100-1, the Master Race looks less like the S.S. than the Gang That Couldn't Shoot Straight. If the "Euro-Americans" are Nazis, the Indians must be Hogan's Heroes. The Indian population has grown in every decade since 1890, with the rate of increase accelerating since 1950.[12] The Indian population is increasing much more rapidly than the white – whites presumably being the most masterful part of the Master Race.[13] "In recent years," wrote Murray L. Wax in 1971, "a variety of advantages – economic, political, and even social – have begun to accrue to those classified as 'Indian.'"[14] Among the less undeserving objects of Churchill's ire are the "plastic Indians," whites who make money off imitating Indian religion (215-222). He fails to notice that their very existence refutes his blood libel. How many Germans under Nazism went around pretending to be *rabbis* – or, as Churchill would say, "plastic Jews"?

Although his scholarship is bogus and bigoted, Churchill has wormed his way into a very cozy situation. Since he has tenure, it doesn't matter that his pseudo-academic writings aren't acceptable to even the mediocre academic journals, and their standards are not high. Instead he places them in leftist or racial nationalist periodicals. Even the better anarchist publications, such as *Anarchy* and the *Fifth Estate*, have published Churchill despite his authoritarian and nationalist politics. Even anarchists are unduly impressed by a professor, an ostensible Indian, and his show of footnotes. Churchill gets flown all over the country to address audiences of white leftists who pay him to guilt-trip them. How sweet the pain!

Churchill has enjoyed pretty much a free ride from academics, leftists, anarchists and the disaffected – with the notable exception of his Indian critics. His campus hustle doesn't matter – as a hustler, if in no other way, he has found a natural home in the academy – but his access to oppositional currents is troubling, and it's hard to see what to do about it. As Lawrence Jarach says,

> "The trouble with examining any skilled dissimulator (not just Ward Churchill), trying to contextualize their heaps of lies and insinuations, and actually reading their footnotes is that it requires at least as much space (usually more) as they use to spread their crap, resulting in a long and detailed analysis. Two further problems then arise: first is a nearly endless tome which no one would want to publish; second is that the exposer/analyzer would most likely be accused of being obsessed, or of having a vendetta or a personal grudge."[15]

Appreciating these problems, I was at a loss what to do about Churchill. It was galling that he should get away with everything just because it was impractical to take him on about everything. I decided I would just take apart a single short Churchill text. That couldn't establish the legitimacy of his scholarship generally, but if it showed that at least once his scholarship was severely shabby and terribly tendentious, that might post a warning about the rest of it. I might have chosen anything. Instead of choosing something easy, something about metaphorical media genocide, I chose the one essay about a real event. Genocide is a button-pushing word. If Churchill can't even push this button, it's a good guess that he's a pushover.

The Sand Creek Massacre

The Sand Creek, Colorado massacre of 1864 has nothing to do with Churchill's asserted subjects – literature and cinema – but dragging it in associates hyperbolic rhetorical genocide with something more like the real thing. The facts, to which Churchill makes no original contribution, are straightforward. A force consisting mainly of temporarily enrolled cavalry ("hundred-day men"), acting without orders, attacked an encampment of peaceable Cheyennes (and a few Arapahoes) at Sand Creek, Colorado, on November 29, 1864. Three U.S. government inquiries, two in 1865, another in 1867, concluded that there was no justification for the butchery (112-113). Churchill complains that the commanding officer, Col. John Chivington, was not punished, although he acknowledges that the disgrace ended Chivington's budding political career (113). This, Churchill falsely asserts, was "the only tangible consequence visited upon anyone who had played a major role in the mini-Holocaust" (113).[16]

Churchill does not mention that court-martial proceedings against Chivington had to be dropped because he and most of his men had already been mustered out.[17] A murder prosecution would have been fully warranted by the facts, but it would have been an exercise in futility. In 1862, Chivington commanded a Union cavalry force which forced the retreat of a Confederate army invading the Colorado Territory. Now, with the Civil War and an Indian war still raging – the Sand Hill Cheyennes were peaceable, many others were not – a jury of twelve white men drawn from a panic-stricken settler population would have had to agree unanimously to convict a soldier who had saved them from conquest for a capital crime for killing Indians.

Whatever Churchill thinks he is doing in "It Did Happen Here," it can hardly be exposing a cover-up. He himself cites 19 books and a few articles which cover the event (113-115). Of the modern volumes which focus on Sand Creek, one he dismisses – correctly I'm sure, but without substantiation – as "lies, distortions and unabashed polemics on behalf of Sand Creek's perpetrators" (114).[18] Another book, by Donald Svaldi, wins Churchill's praise for toeing his own whites-as-Nazis line, though not quite explicitly enough for a hardened hater like Churchill (119-120).[19] A third, by Stan Hoig,[20] he praises as honest and accurate, although – Churchill having never engaged in original research on this (or any other) historical subject – he has no apparent reason for thinking so except that its findings suit his political purposes.

Thus far, then, what Churchill calls "Euroamerican" historians (he means white historians, but saying so would underscore his own racism) are running 2-1 in favor of the story he thinks is good for the Indians. If "It Did Happen Here," he has Euroamericans to thank for the documentation to make sure we never forget. His attempt to say something important, that is, something vilificatory about "Sand Creek, Scholarship and the American Character" (111) has badly miscarried. It reflects well on the American character, if it reflects on it at all, that Americans have recorded and recounted the shameful facts for over a century. So, half-wittingly aware that he has debunked himself, Churchill goes all out to smear the fourth Sand Creek book as culturally genocidal, although it is just as pro-Indian as two of the other three.

The better – I should say, the larger – part of Churchill's invective is aimed at *Month of the Frozen Moon* by Duane Schultz.[21] It is, he says, "essentially duplicative" of Hoig's earlier, superior volume (115) – although, as a full-length book, it is nowhere near as essentially duplicative as Churchill's own two-paragraph paraphrase (111-112). If, as Churchill fervently feels, this story cannot be told (that is, "duplicated") too often, than any substantially accurate depiction is to be welcomed. Churchill quibbles over a few factual details (115-116), but in calling the book "essentially duplicative" and "vaguely plagiaristic" (115) of the book Churchill endorses, he backhandedly vouches for it. Unless, of course, the hapless Schultz (I am again reminded of "Hogan's Heroes") has smuggled in gratuitous anti-Indian, crypto-Nazi propaganda. Needless to say, he hasn't. Needless to say, Churchill says he has (116-118).

Schultz is "truly malicious and objectionable" because of his "adoption of the Euroamerican standard of 'academic objectivity' which decrees that whenever one addresses the atrocities committed by the status quo, one is duty-bound to 'balance

one's view' by depicting some negativity embodies in its victims" (116). Since Churchill himself is an academic, when he voices contempt for academic objectivity, he must be disparaging it, not for being academic, but for being objective. It's sporting of him to put the reader on notice not to trust anything he says, but it also reinforces the pernicious prejudice that the work of minority-group scholars concerning their own groups must be dismissed out of hand for inherent bias.[22]

Here is Schultz's offending passage:

> "[B]efore there were whites to rob and plunder and steal from, the [Indians] robbed and stole from each other. Before there were white men in the country to kill, they killed each other. Before there were white women and children to scalp and mutilate and torture, the Indians scalped and mutilated and tortured the women and children of the enemies of their own race. They made slaves of each other when there were no palefaces to be captured and sold or held for ransom, and before they commenced lying in ambush along the trails of the white man to ambush unwary travelers, the Indians of one tribe would set the same sort of death traps for the Indians of another tribe (116, quoting Schultz at 16)."

That is *all* Schultz has to say which might possibly evidence the sort of contrived equalization Churchill purports to deplore. All the rest of the book is about the massacre of unoffending Indians by racist whites. The appropriate objection is not that the passage is untrue but rather that it is banal. Except for scalping, an Indian invention,[23] most peoples worldwide have engaged in these practices at one time or another. Anglo-Americans engaged in them all in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries at Indian expense. But one platitudinous paragraph doesn't cancel out a bookful of uncomfortable history. Any white who seizes on this paragraph to marginalize the Sand Creek massacre would find another pretext in the unlikely event he read the book in the first place. And this suppositious "settler" – another of Churchill's absurd anti-white epithets – is as unlikely to read Churchill as he is to believe him.

But this is not what Professor Churchill says. He says it's a flat-out lie: "None of this is substantiated, or even substantiable [sic]. It instead flies directly in the face of most well researched and grounded understandings regarding how the Cheyennes did business [!] in pre-contact times as well as the early contact period" (117). None of it, mind you, *is* or ever *could* be substantiated. Churchill elides the fact that the offending paragraph refers to Indians in general, not Cheyennes in particular. Not even a propagandist as cheeky as Churchill has the effrontery to allege that there was no war and no theft in pre-Columbian North America. Not-so-adroitly changing the subject – not that this will save him, as we shall see – Churchill as self-appointed defense attorney for the Cheyennes asserts that his clients are innocent of all charges. His denials are not, however, "substantiated." Most of Schulz's assertions are not only true, they are substantiated by a source approved by Churchill himself, George Bird Grinnell (113).

The Cheyennes Robbed and Stole from Other Indians

In *The Fighting Cheyennes,* first published in 1913, George Bird Grinnell, who'd dealt with Plains Indians as early as 1874, related the story of Cheyenne warfare from their point of view. Referring to the period prior to contact with the Americans, he stated: "The Kiowas and Comanches made frequent raids into the country of the Mexicans, in Texas and South of the Rio Grande, and from these forays brought back great herds of horses. These in turn were taken from them by the Cheyennes and the Arapahos, from whom again they were captured by the Pawnees and by other tribes still farther to the north."[24]

As Grinnell observed in another of his books: "[Some Cheyenne] men went to war for the sole purpose of increasing their possessions by capturing horses; that is, they carried on war as a business – for profit."[25] So the Cheyennes did rob and steal from other Indians – or as Churchill would say, that is how they "did business."

The Cheyennes Killed Other Indians

To say the least! The tribe was "almost constantly at war with its neighbors," as Grinnell said, and it was the aggressor – against the Assiniboins (northern Dakotas), Pawnees and Shoshones, and also against "the Kiowas, the Comanches, and the Crows, all of whom they gradually expelled from the country they had invaded."[26] As their friend Grinnell put it, the Cheyennes were "a people whose chief occupation was war."[27] To deny the Cheyennes their glorious martial heritage is cultural genocide if anything is. Churchill finds fault with the American national characer. How do the Cheyennes compare? A contemporary anthropologist writes: "Part of the Cheyenne national character was to invade the central plains, expel other tribes, and hunt there exclusively. They claimed such new territory by right of conquest."[28] Sounds familiar.

The Cheyennes Scalped, Mutilated and Tortured Other Indian Men, Women and Children

Of course they did. My impression is that, in general, Indians when at war did not target women, children and old men to anything like the extent the Euro-Americans often did. But at times Indians, including Plains Indians, did. Nor did they have to learn how from the whites. At Wolf Creek in 1838, the Cheyennes butchered twelve or thirteen Kiowa women.[29] In 1819, the Cheyennes attacked a Crow camp in which, like the Cheyenne camp at Sand Creek, "there were no fighting men, only middle-aged and old men, so there was not much fighting, but everyone in the camp was killed or captured."[30] In 1856 they attacked two small wagon trains, killing several men, three women and two children.[31]

The Cheyennes routinely scalped their victims,[32] celebrating afterwards with scalp dances. Other mutilations of enemy dead were also common. In 1838 they cut up the bodies of eight slain Pawnees, "disjointing their bones."[33] After the Custer Fight, "the women and children went up to the battleground, and *as usual* there was

mutilation of the dead."[34] An old Cheyenne recollected the time he and others killed a Crow horse thief: "After he was dead, we cut off his hands and feet and head. It looked funny to see his body lying there without any hands or feet or head. Even now, when I think of him I have to laugh."[35] Such fun! On occasion the Cheyennes sacrificed captives.[36] All this is more than enough to establish that Churchill's denials are not only false, they are laughable. To deny that the Cheyennes, like able soldiers everywhere, set ambushes for their enemies[37] is not to defend them, it is to defame them. As for torture, so popular among all the Plains Indians, there is no point bothering to discuss it.

Now the pop historian Schultz did misspeak himself in several respects. The Cheyennes had no institution properly called slavery, nor did they trade in captives, although in the 1870s an observer mentioned Leon, a Mexican "who had been a prisoner among the [Cheyenne] Indians almost like a slave from the time he was a boy."[38] They kidnapped many women and children from other tribes (and occasionally from the whites), not to enslave them in an economic sense, but to incorporate them into their own tribe at the expense of their enemies.[39] It was, in other words, forced cultural assimilation, what Russell Means and Ward Churchill call genocide – except when Indians do it. It is, in fact, the only form of so-called cultural genocide which counts as genocide under the 1948 Genocide Convention.

But then Schultz never accused the Cheyennes *specifically* of all these practices, although he could have. If they were not slaveholders and slave-traders, other North American Indians were. Southeastern Indians such as the Creeks and Cherokees – dubiously claimed as ancestors by Churchill – already formed class-stratified societies in pre-contact times.[40] They enslaved other Indians in prehistoric times, and after white slaveholders established themselves along their borders, they borrowed from them the practice of black slavery. When the Cherokees walked the Trail of Tears to Oklahoma, they brought their black slaves along. During the Civil War, they allied with the Confederacy.[41] As for the slave trade, in the 17th and 18th centuries, northeastern Indians kidnapped hundreds of Anglo-Americans, mostly women and children, torturing a few of the men to death for the fun of it, adopting some captives, ransoming others, and selling the rest to the French in Canada.[42]

It Did Happen Here – In 1325 A.D.

Sand Creek was the slaughter of peaceable Indians, most of them defenseless, most of them women and children, carried out by panicky, paranoid amateur soldiers with deep-seated anti-Indian prejudices. It was, according to contemporary opinion and the settled judgment of history, inexcusable. And yet, for Churchill it is emblematic of the "American Character." Nothing could more clearly mark the moral divide between the "settlers"[43] and the Plains Indians than the Sand Creek massacre. Right?

Wrong. It *did* happen here – long before Custer, Chivington, Columbus or Cortez – and not all that far from Sand Creek. Around the year 1325 A.D., at least 486 Arikara Indians – men, women, and children, some 60% of its population, were exterminated at the Crow Creek Village in south-central South Dakota. The "young adult females" are underrepresented, probably because they were kidnapped. It is impossible to identify the assailants with any particular Plains tribe of historic times, although the cranial samples are most similar to the Pawnee — ancient enemies of the Cheyennes. Scalping and mutilation were already in vogue: "There are many mutilations on the bones. Scalping, skull fractures, evulsions, and decapitations are common."[44] The perpetrators were likely not Cheyennes, who were then probably living a semi-sedentary life along the shores of the western Great Lakes or the upper tributaries of the Mississippi.[45] But precisely which Plains Indians exterminated which other Plains Indians in pre-contact times (with no inspiration or encouragement from Europeans) is beside the point. The point is that Schultz is mostly right (albeit by accident) and Churchill is mostly wrong (undoubtedly by design) about prehistoric red-on-red violence on the Great Plains.

What All This is Really About

How is it possible for Churchill to pass off his racist fantasies as scholarship? [46] And how did he ever gain the credibility of a tenured faculty position at the University of Colorado at Boulder without a normally acquired Ph.D? These are more interesting questions than any Churchill falsifies the answers to.

It's not that I accord reflexive respect to academic credentials. I have four degrees myself, and I have had plenty of opportunity to see how little degrees can mean. I'd consider it entirely appropriate if an American Indian tribal elder or shaman were made a professor of American Indian Studies as Churchill has been – not to the exclusion of academically trained anthropologists, historians and sociologists but to complement, and where necessary to correct, their understanding of the Indian experience. Moreover, professionally trained Indian academics are making prominent contributions to Indian scholarship, among them sociologist/demographic historian Russell Thornton (Cherokee), historian James Riding In (Pawne), and economist Ronald L. Trosper (Flathead).[47] Churchill's is another story. He took a political shortcut to the podium.

Although Churchill is confused about the definition of genocide, he's perhaps had some hands-on experience committing it – in Vietnam: "Churchill was airborne-qualified and in a 4th Infantry Division LRRP [long range reconaissance patrol] in the highlands region in 1968."[48] Following his stint as a terrorizer of civilians, Churchill next turned up in the authoritarian terrorist Weatherman faction of SDS. He was a suspect in the 1970 bombing at Camp McCoy, Wisconsin.[49] Thus he made his political debut as a Marxist, not a nationalist – but we need look no further than Russia or Serbia to see how trifling the difference can be. His modest proposal for the ethnic cleansing of one-third of the United States is on the scale of Stalin's population relocations and surpasses Hitler's. He refers to "'totalitarian' Third World countries like Cuba and Libya" in quo-

tation marks – implying that they are not really totalitarian, or it doesn't matter if they are – and compares their incarceration rates favorably to that of the United States.[50]

A review of the Weatherman program establishes the extraordinary continuity in Churchill's, for lack of a better word, thinking. The Weathermen were white anti-white racists. According to their half-baked mongrel Maoism, only the colonized Third World peoples within and without the Third World could be revolutionary. The white working class could not be revolutionary, although white youth (namely, themselves) might play an auxiliary role.[51] As one of them put it, "All white babies are pigs." Weatherwoman Bernadine Dohrn – now a lawyer – waxed ecstatic over the killings by the Manson Family.[52] The white proletariat had been bought out, according to the privileged children of the parents who must have done the buying. These vanguardists supposed that they could escape the self-contradictory implications of their crude class analysis by the blustering vehemence of their unsolicited solidarity with the Third World. Considering the variation on this theme which Churchill was later to make a career out of, it is a fine irony that Black Panther Fred Hampton condemned the Weathermen as "custeristic."[53]

The 1970s were years in which the left both declined (in its following) and decomposed (into various racial, sexual and ideological special-interest groups.[54] Ex-Weathermen were even less popular than Vietnam veterans. It took Churchill awhile to find his way from the warpath to the career path. He became a staff writer for *Soldier of Fortune* magazine.[55] Finally he discovered, or invented, his Indian heritage. In 1978 he took on the new role of professional Indian.[56] By 1983, he was "director of Planning, Research and Development for Educational Opportunity Programs at the University of Colorado/Boulder."[57] In plain English, he was an affirmative-action bureaucrat, a paid racemonger. He made the most of the gig, and very possibly wrote himself a job description to jump into academia. So he is now, without even possessing a standard doctorate, a tenured ethnic-studies professor at the university in the posh resort town of Boulder. (Does he still think all white babies are pigs? That might have some bearing on the JonBenet Ramsey case.)

Along the way, Churchill has been inconsistent about his own ethnicity. In 1983 he was claiming to be "Creek/Cherokee."[58] By 1992, he more modestly claimed to be "Creek/Cherokee/Metis" (303). This too is misleading, but we are finding the range. Strictly speaking, Metis are Canadians of mixed French and Indian ancestry – which Churchill is not – but in a broader sense, a Metis is someone of mixed white and Indian ancestry.[59] Churchill thus qualifies, but only barely. The expression "Creek/Cherokee/Metis" is both odd and deceptive. Odd, because it is like saying someone is "African-American/mulatto," a mulatto being someone who is African-American/white, so an African-American/mulatto is an African-American/African-American/white, and a Creek/Cherokee/Metis is an Indian/Indian/white. Do I detect some reluctance on his part to include the W-word in Churchill's heritage? Besides being bizarre, the identification is deceptive. It leaves the impression that Churchill is mostly Indian, whereas he is mostly white. By his own estimation, which may be generously self-serving, he claims he is one-sixteenth Creek and Cherokee.[60] That means Churchill is four generations removed from even one Indian ancestor. By 1996, however, Churchill reverted to full dishonesty, again calling himself Creek/Cherokee.[61]

In any sense of the word that makes any sense, Ward Churchill is not an Indian. He is not an enrolled member of any tribe.[62] He did not grow up on, and has never resided on a reservation, the only place where anything like traditional Indian culture persists. He prefers living outside the tony, almost all-white resort town of Boulder ("you don't get older in Boulder," the locals like to say – JonBenet sure didn't). He draws a good salary from the State of Colorado, whose volunteers carried out the Sand Creek massacre; to qualify for it, he took an oath to uphold the Constitutions of the United States and the State of Colorado. He disparages "the stark, pathetic emptiness" of Western religions, but he nowhere hints in any of his writings that he practices any Indian religion. Thus he is not an Indian in any political, cultural or lifestyle respect. The only criterion he might satisfy is a racial one.

Except that he doesn't. Tens of millions of whites, blacks and especially Hispanics have more Indian ancestry than Churchill (I may be one of them) but they do not consider themselves Indians and neither does anybody else. Tom Giago, an enrolled Oglala Sioux born and raised on the Pine Ridge reservation, the publisher of *Indian Country Today*, considers Churchill a "white profiteer, a police agent and a terrorist." The infiltration of New Left/New Age ersatz Indians like Churchill has bitterly divided the American Indian Movement, an organization which, despite its small size, the U.S. Government once genuinely feared. Churchill was expelled in 1993, but continues to bill himself as Co-Director of Colorado AIM and as "a member of the governing council of the American Indian Movement."[63] As Carole Standing Elk, a Dakota and director of the San Francisco Bay Area AIM chapter, says: "It's obvious he has no spiritual base. He's trying to subvert the movement."[64] David Bradley, a Chippewa artist, observes that Churchill "is a white man, posing as an Indian" who "is victimizing Indian people, politically, morally and spiritually." According to Carole Standing Elk, Churchill is out "to exploit the American Indian Movement in order to further his personal career objectives."[65]

AIM should shoulder some responsibility for opening opportunities for interlopers like Churchill. The Indians who founded AIM in the 1960s were detribalized urban radicals emulating the white New Left and adopting its strategy of staging media spectacles. One of these, the occupation of Alcatraz Island, came off very well. Another, the occupation of Wounded Knee, turned into a bloody shambles. These American Indians were much more American than Indian. There were no "indigenists"

in 1492. Indigenism is an ideology invented in the 20th century by Mexican intellectuals of Spanish descent. It's a form of nationalism, a European invention. As often as not, national identities – even the ones that take root – originate in the minds of disgruntled intellectuals, not as an upwelling of solidarity among the Volk.[66] As Maurray L. Wax relates, "'Indians' were not entities who were present in pre-Colombian times, . . this social identity emerged in relationship to the invasions of Europeans."[67]

It is precisely the detribalized Indians like Churchill and Means who assert, in their own interest, a pan-Indian identity alien to how Indians traditionally understood themselves:

> "The American Indian Movement held the most headlines in the late sixties and seventies, a romantic inversion of racialism, and praise for generic cultures. These urban radicals were tribal simulations with dubious constituencies, and their stoical poses, tragic and lonesome, were closer to photographic and video images familiar to a commercial culture; these ersatz warriors were much closer to the invented tragedies of a vanishing race than were the crossbloods who endured the real politics and weather on reservations."[68]

The definition of group identity is at once the crux of identity politics and its fatal flaw. It is necessarily a process of exclusion. To mention two real-life examples, when Koreans decided to be Korean, they decided not to be Chinese, and when Lithuanians rather recently decided to be Lithuanian, they decided they were not Polish or Russian. But what if what one group excludes, the group they are excluding continues to include? Some Russian nationalists consider Ukrainians to be Russian; most Ukrainians disagree. If every group's membership is determined by the group, than groups can arrive at contradictory determinations about the same people. Identity politics provides no principle for resolving these jurisdictional disputes.

If the identification – or rather, the construction – of group identity is fundamentally arbitrary, fortuitous and even manipulable, identifying a group's individual members adds another dimension of confusion and potential contestation. Politically organized groups like nation-states or hierarchic religions like Roman Catholicism can determine definitively who is a citizen or a communicant. But no authority can decide with any finality who is a punk, an anarchist, a Wiccan, a homosexual, etc.

Identity politics is especially treacherous for Indians because Indian identity is so confused and complicated. The clearest definition of an Indian is a political one: enrolled members of Federally recognized tribes, or those eligible for recognition, are Indians. These tribes determine their membership by criteria of their own choice (and Federal law defers to their decisions). While this standard settles most cases of Indian identity, and most Indians satisfy it, everybody agrees that it is underinclusive. Some people who rightly regard themselves as Indians are left out. Some tribes are, rightly or wrongly, unrecognized. Some people with some aboriginal North American ancestry (maybe not much, but maybe as much as some tribally recognized Indians) have significant cultural, religious and social connections with other Indians, and if they have these ties and identify themselves as Indians, they're Indians. But that makes for a gray area available for infiltration by fast-talking, well-funded palefaces like Ward Churchill whose red racist rhetoric occludes the fact that, though he's a Red, he's not a red man.

If Churchill's indigenism is the radical threat he says it is, why does the government pay him to propagate it? When Churchill first surfaces, he is hunting down indigenous people for the U.S. Government. Next he is a member of the agent-ridden Weatherman SDS; then a staff writer for *Soldier of Fortune;* and then a sachem in the agent-riddled American Indian Movement. Next, notwithstanding this unsavory background, he works as a bureaucrat for a state university, from which gig he is bootstrapped into a tenure-track faculty position for which he has no qualifications, and soon he is tenured. His noisy presence in the Amerindian nationalist movement helps to splinter it. For Churchill, the test of indigenist orthodoxy is simple: you pass it if – but only for so long as – you promote Churchill's career. Thus, as recently as 1992 it was politically incorrect to disagree with the International Indian Treaty Council (137), but now that these bona fide Indians have had the temerity to criticize Professor Churchill, by 1994 they are "hang-around-the-forts, sell-outs and 'nickel' Indians . . ."[69] Is Churchill, as many suspect, a police agent? Nobody's said it better than Churchill himself: "You don't have to be a cop to do a cop's work."[70]

Postscript: Ends and Means

Churchill has no closer collaborator than perennial publicity hound Russell Means, who proclaims that Churchill's "reputation for unflinching commitment as an American Indian leader is impeccable."[71] For a fact, they are two of a kind.

For Russell, the ends justify the means: Russell Means. A Sioux (Lakota) Indian of mixed ancestry, Means is the finest showman the American Indians have produced since Sitting Bull joined Buffalo Bill Cody's road show. Not as athletic as Jim Thorpe or Jack Dempsey, not as pretty as Pocahontas or Jay Silverhills, not as funny as Will Rogers or Ward Churchill, Means is more versatile than any of these more-or-less Native Americans.

Means first made the scene in the 60s as a leader of the American Indian Movement which, as noted, put on a good show at Alcatraz, before the sequel bombed at Wounded Knee. As the winds of fashion shifted, Means turned traditionalist, adding New Age spirituality to his act. Consistent with his rediscovery of traditional values, in 1984 he ran for Vice-President on a ticket headed up by *Hustler* publisher Larry Flynt.[72]

In 1987, Means sought the Presidential nomination of – get this – the Libertarian Party! It was my privilege to observe, ostensibly as a journalist, the LP nominating convention in 1987. As usual, Means lost – this

time to ex-Republican Texas Congressman Ron Paul. Libertarian palefaces are afraid of persons of color, especially if, like Means, they open every campaign speech with a prayer, in Lakota, to the Great Spirit. None of them knew that Means does not speak Lakota.[73] Means brought along a picturesque Indian entourage, but I saw a lot more Indians in the bar across the street from the hotel.

In Fantasies of the Master Race, wherein Ward Churchill approvingly quotes Russell Means (1), the author denounces all cinematic representations of Indians as colonialist, even if they feature Indians as actors, including *Dances With Wolves* (231-241). One gropes for a suitable Indian-style name for Ward Churchill. Chief Standing Water? Shitting Bull? Dances With Tax-Free Foundations? Only a film glorifying contemporary Indians (whom might Churchill have in mind?), he insists, could be anything but counter-revolutionary.

Around the time Churchill's book came out, so did a movie, *The Last of the Mohicans*, co-starring an Indian – an experienced actor – as Churchill would say, "a cross between Mike Hammer and Tonto." His name? Russell Means.

Notes

1) Ward Churchill, *Fantasies of the Master Race: Literature, Cinema and the Colonization of the American Indian* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1992); numbers in parentheses are page references to this book.

2) "He is an associate professor of American Indian Studies and Communication" at the University of Colorado at Boulder (303). He holds this tenured position without having obtained a Ph.D. in the normal fashion; instead, he was awarded a doctorate (*honoris causa*) from Alfred University.

3) Ward Churchill, "I am Indigenist: Notes on the Ideology of the Fourth World," in *Struggle for the Land : Indigenous Resistance to Genocide, Ecocide and Expropriation in Contemporary North America* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1993), 403-451.

4) This estimate, which I have previously published with no challenge from Churchill, is based on comparison of a map of the proposed Indian State – we can't publish it, he copywrited it! – with 1990 census data. Ibid., 430 & passim; *1990 Census of Population – General Population Characteristics – American Indian and Alaska Native Areas, 1990 CP-1-1A* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1992), 1 (reporting a total U.S. population of 28,709,873, and an Indian/Eskimo/Aleut population of 1,959,234). There is no reason to believe that more than a handful of Indians espouse this genocidal scheme. The foremost Indian nationalist organization, the American Indian Movement (AIM), claims only 5,000 members. *Barry T. Klein, Reference Encyclopedia of the American Indian* (West Nyack, NY: Todd Publications, 1990), 98.

5) Churchill, "Genocide in Arizona?: The Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute' in Perspective," in Struggle for the Land, 159-160.

6) Churchill, "Perversions of Justice: Examining the Doctrine of U.S. Rights to Occupancy in North America," in Struggle for the Land, 47. Churchill's source in fact estimated the losses at 50%, not 55%. Russell Thornton, "Cherokee Population Losses During the 'Trail of Tears': A New Perspective and Estimate," 31 Ethnohistory (1984): 289-300, at 293.

7) "Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948," Art. II, in *Basic Documents on Human Rights,* ed. Ian Brownlie (2nd ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 31.

8) Leo Kuper, *Genocide: Its Political Use in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1981), 30-31.

9) Ward Churchill, "Genocide: Toward a Functional Definition," in *Since Predator Came: Notes from the Struggle for American Indian Liberation* (Littleton, CO: Aigis Publications, 1995), 89, 96. The United States has never ratified the Convention.

10) Gordon Bennett, *Aboriginal Rights in International Law,* Occasional Paper No. 1 (London: Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1978). The U.S. Constitution rejects the claims of Indian tribes to be sovereign and independent nations. Johnson & Graham's Lessee v. M'Intosh, 21 U.S. (8 Wheat.) 543 (1823). Rather, they are "domestic dependent nations" whose "relation to the United States resembles that of a ward to his guardian." Cherokee Nation v. Georgia, 30 U.S. (1 Pet.) 1, 17 (1831).

11) Appendix to Gudmundur Alfredsson, "The United Nations and the Rights of Indigenous Peoples," *Current Anthropology* 30 (1989): 254-259, at 257-259.

12) Murray L. Wax, *Indian Americans: Unity and Diversity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1971), 32-29, 220.

13) Churchill assiduously avoids the problem "indigenism" poses to *blacks.* Probably more blacks (and more whites) have Indian ancestry than the less than two million people reckoned as Indians. And they have *their* historic claims too, not only against the whites, but against some of the Indians—such as the slaveowning southeastern Indians from whom Ward Churchill claims descent. See n. 41 and accompanying text *infra.* This consideration alone shows up Churchill's succession-ism as absurd as well as pernicious.

14) Wax, Ibid., 34. It was when he realized this a few years later that Ward Churchill went into the Indian business. See his "Introduction: Journeying Toward a Debate," in *Marxism and Native Americans,* ed. Ward Churchill (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1983), 1-4.

15) Letter, *Anarchy: A Journal of Desire Armed,* No. 46 (Fall-Winter 1998-1999), 82.

16) "Less than two months later a few of his [Chivington's] veterans, bound for the East, were approached by a band of those [Southern Cheyenne] Indians who carried out swift retribution." Robert G. Athearn, *The Coloradans* (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 75.

17) Stan Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 161.

18) William R. Dunn, *"I Stand by Sand Creek": A Defence of Colonel John M. Chivington and the Third Colorado Cavalry* (Fort Collins, CO: Old Army Press, 1985).

19) David Svaldi, *Sand Creek and the Rhetoric of Extermination: A Case Study in Indian-White Relations* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989).

20) Note 17 supra.

21) Duane Schulz, *Month of the Freezing Moon* (New York: St. Martin's, 1990).

22) George M. Frederickson, "Pioneer," *New York Review of Books,* Sept. 23, 1993, 30-33, at 30.

23) James Axtell, *The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), chs. 2 & 8. Churchill acknowledges that Axtell's scholarship is "widely respected" (166) although his acquaintance with it must be rather superficial, since he gets the author's first name wrong. More recently, Churchill reversed himself without explanation: now Axtell is a "hack historian." Churchill, *When Predator Came,* 63.

24) George Bird Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1956), 38.

25) George Bird Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians: Their History and Ways of Life* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1923), 2: 2.

26) Grinnell, The Fighting Cheyennes, ix, 6-7.

27) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 6.

28) John H. Moore, *The Cheyenne Nation: A Social and Demographic History* (Lincoln, NE: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 12.

29) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 57-58; Donald J. Berthrong, The Southern Cheyennes (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), 83.

30) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 29.

31) Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes,* 135. In raids after January 14, 1865, Cheyennes killed five men, one woman and two children. Ibid., 227. Further examples abound.

32) Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians,* 1: 166, 232; 2: 8, 29, 36, 163, 197, 201, 233-234.

33) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 79.

34) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 354 (emphasis added).

35) "A Cheyenne Old Man," in *Cheyenne and Sioux: The Reminiscences of Four Indians and a White Soldier,* comp. Thomas R. Marquis, ed. Ronald H. Limbaugh (Stockton, CA: University of the Pacific, Pacific Center for Western Historical Studies, 1973), 29.

36) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 73.

37) Grinnell, *The Fighting Cheyennes,* 56-57.

38) John H. Seger, *Early Days Among the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians,* ed. Stanley Vestal (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1956), 30.

39) Moore, *The Cheyenne Nation,* 189.

40) Alex W. Barker & Timothy R. Pauketat, eds., *Lords of the Southeast: Social Inequality and the Native Elites of Southeastern North America* (Washington, DC: American Anthropological Association, 1992).

41) R. Halliburton, Jr., *Red Over Black: Black Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1987); Annie Heloise Abel, *The American Indian as Slaveholder and Secessionist* (Cleveland, OH: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1915).

42) James Axtell, *The Invasion Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), ch. 13 ("The White Indian") & passim.

43) This is one of Churchill's favorite epithets for white Americans – although nothing is so well-settled about the peopling of America that, to quote the first sentence of a leading college history text, "The first American was an immigrant," that is to say, a settler. John M. Blum et al., *The National Experience* (8th ed.; Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers, 1992), 3.

Churchill subscribes to the crackpot theory that the human race originated in the Western Hemisphere. Ward Churchill & Dora-Lee Larson, "The Same Old Song in Sad Refrain," Churchill, ed., *Marxism and Native Americans,* 66-67, 207, citing Jeffery Goodman, *American Genesis: The American Indian and the Origins of Modern Man* (New York: Summit Books, 1980), whose methodology consists of what Goodman calls "psychic archeology." On Goodman, who claims some Amerindian ancestry, see Stephen Williams, *Fantastic Archeology: The Wild Side of North American Prehistory* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 301-304. Churchill doesn't notice that he's refuted himself. If all humans are of New World origin, their coming here was a homecoming, not an invasion.

Needless to say, archeologists are unanimous in affirming

the Old World origins of humanity. Leslie C. Aiello, "The Fossil Evidence for Modern Human Origins in Africa: A Revised View," *American Anthropologist* 95 (March 1993): 73-96.

44) P. Willey, *Prehistoric Warfare on the Great Plains: Skeletal Analysis of the Crow Creek Massacre Victims* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1990), xv.

45) Grinnell, *The Cheyenne Indians*, 1: 4; Berthrong, *The Southern Cheyennes*, 4.

46) *In Fantasies of the Master Race*, he claimed his Sand Creek screed was "forthcoming in *American Indian Culture and Research Journal*" – a reputable publication –but it never appeared there.

47) Colin G. Calloway, ed., *New Directions in American Indian History* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988), 250.

48) Ward Churchill & J.J. Vander Wall, eds., *The COINTELPRO Papers* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1990), 223 n. 3.

49) Ibid., 380 n. 181.

50) Ward Churchill & J.J. Vander Wall, eds., *Cages of Steel: The Politics of Imprisonment in the United States* (Washington, DC: Maisonnueve Press, 1992), 11. One reason why Cuba might have a (slightly) lower incarceration rate is the Mariel expulsion of Cuban criminals, reducing their prison population and soon increasing ours.

51) Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (Nw York: Random House, 1973), 628; Irwin Unger, *The Movement: A History of the American New Left*, 1959-1972 (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1974), 164-166.

52) Sale, *SDS*, 628.

53) Sale, *SDS*, 174.

54) Bob Black, *Withered Anarchism* (London: Green Anarchist Books, 1998), 25-28.

55) California American Indian Movement, "Nobody's Pet Poodle? Then Who Is Holding His Leash?" (unpaginated flyer).

56) Churchill, "Introduction," *Marxism and Native Americans*, 8-9.

57) *Ibid*, 220.

58) *Ibid.*

59) Dennis F.K. Madill, "Riel, Red River, and Beyond: New Developments in Metis History," in Calloway, ed., *New Directions in American Indian History*, 53.

60) Jodi Rave, "Few Who Know Churchill are Indifferent", *Colorado Daily* (Nov. 23, 1993), 3.

61) Churchill, *Since Predator Came* (back cover).

62) According to the official genealogist of the Cherokee Nation, Churchill is ineligible for enrollment. Rave, "Few Who Know Churchill are Indifferent," 3. For many years Churchill disparaged enrollment by and in a recognized tribe as a criterion of Indian identity. That, he said, was relinquishing to the white Federal
Government the authority to decide who was an Indian. In fact it's the other way around: Federal law delegates to Indian tribes the right to determine their membership. Recently, Churchill made an unacknowledged, unexplained about-face. On the back cover of *Since Predator Came*, he now claims to be "an enrolled associate member in the United Keetoowah Band of Cherokees." The weasel-word is "associate." Churchill's not really an enrolled member of the Keetoowah Band, whose admission standards are at least as strict as those of the Cherokee Nation, he's an associate, an honorary member. He has belatedly inserted himself into a longstanding dispute between the small Keetoowah Band and the mainstream Cherokee Nation. He and the Keetoowahs are acting on the theory that the enemy of your enemy is your friend (in my opinion, an often untenable theory). Far from proudly disdaining recognition by the Federal government, the Keetoowahs have devoted this century to obtaining Congressional recognition as a band (in 1946) and applying to be a conduit of Federal benefits for the Cherokees. Georgia Rae Leeds, *The United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996).

63) Churchill, *Since Predator Came*, back cover

64) Quotations from Vince Bielski, "Trail of Blood," *SF Weekly* (Oct. 6, 1993), 10-11.

65) Rave, "Few Who Know Churchill Are Indifferent," 3.

66) For example, Lithuanian nationalism was invented around the year 1900 when a few educated people [who spoke Polish or Russian], influenced by modern nationalism, decided that they were Lithuanians, began to speak the Lithuanian language and recalled the military glories of the early Lithuanian State," etc. Hugh Seton-Watson, *Eastern Europe Between the Wars, 1918-1941* (3rd ed., rev.; New York: Harper & Row, 1967), 325, 326.

67) Wax, *Indian Americans*, 25.

68) Gerald Vizenor, *Crossbloods, Bone Courts, Bingo, and Other Reports* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1990), xiii.

69) Ward Churchill, *Indians Are Us? Culture and Genocide in Native North America* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1994), "Acknowledgments" (unpaginated).

70) Quoted in Bielski, "Trail of Blood," 11.

71) Quoted in Bielski, "Trail of Blood," 11.

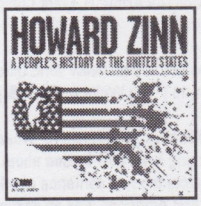
72) Vizenour, *Crossbloods*, 21.

73) Vizenour, *Crossbloods*, 49.

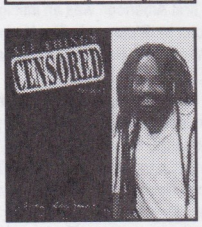
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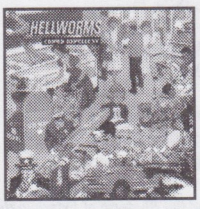
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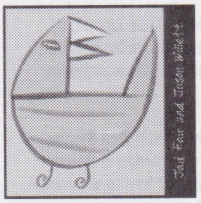
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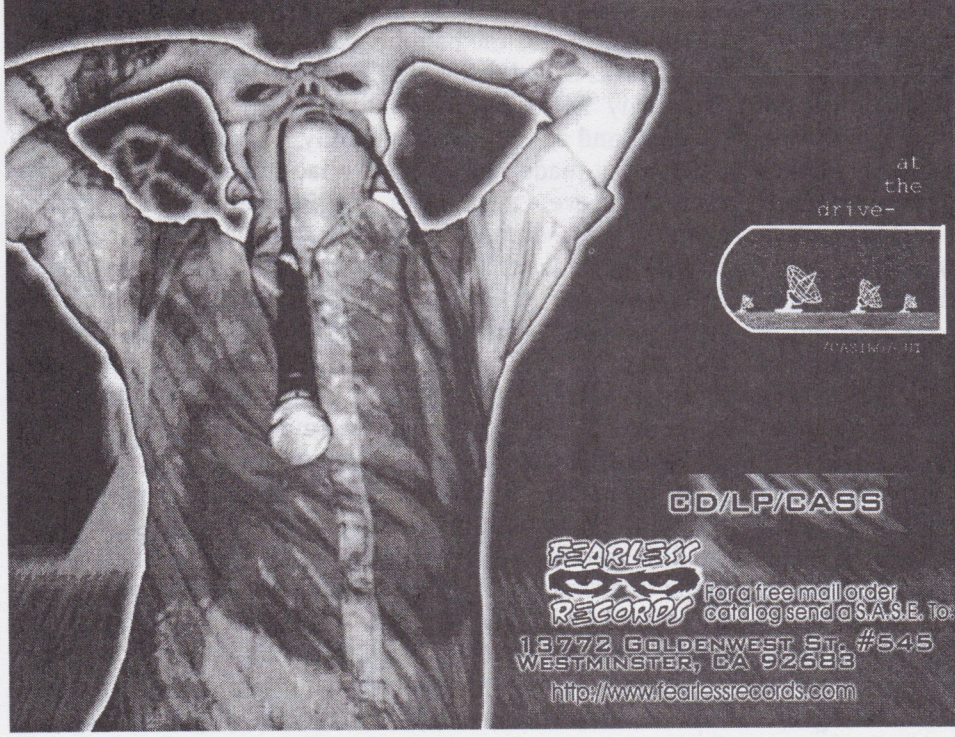
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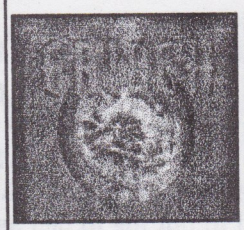


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When I was a little kid who was powerless to fend for myself, my Mother and Father used to put me to bed as early as possible every night. They would pretend that they put me to bed at ridiculous daylight hours because "it was good for me to get plenty of sleep"...that hoary old line of bullshit. It took me hours to get to sleep...hell, I could hear all the other kids on our street playing outside...I never fell asleep until it was good and dark and late. Instead, I lay there hating my parents for being such wet blankets. The truth of the matter was, they just wanted to relax in front of the boobtube for a few hours at night without me or my sister pestering them. I'd hear the TV faintly through my bedroom door...I knew what they were doing. I didn't want to run around and scream and make trouble...I just wanted to be up and around and watch TV with them and maybe eat a little Jiffypop. I knew better than to climb out of bed and disturb their TV party...on the rare occasions that I did so, I got my butt blistered by my old man's belt. One night though, I just couldn't resist. I heard all sorts of excited talk on the TV...like something REALLY important was happening. Whatever it was, it sure as hell wasn't the "Arthur Godfrey" show. My parents, who were two very conservative and cold-blooded Christians, were fucking yelling at the TV!! They NEVER did that! They seemed really pissed off at something. I couldn't resist finding out what the hell was going on in the living room. I sneaked out of my bed and tiptoed as quietly as I could down the hall towards our living room. I was able to find a place to hide myself so that I had a good view of the TV set, yet they couldn't see me.



Oh, my GOD!! No fucking wonder they were upset and yelling at the TV. It looked like a couple of boxers had ripped their gloves off and decided to have a REAL SCRAP!! They were knocking the holy shit out of each other. A young guy with blond hair seemed to be getting the worst of it...a bald headed, mean looking older guy with a beard had his arm wrapped around his neck and was pounding him repeatedly in the face. I had never seen boxing this good! Even though I wasn't even in kindergarten yet, I had seen boxing on the "ABC Wide World of Sports". It would have been cool if the boxers hit each other more often. It looked like they danced around a lot to keep from hurting each other. Ho HUM.

Oh, my GOD!! The blond guy was on his knees with blood pouring out of his forehead. Oh, shit...he COULD DIE!! The evil bald headed dude had a goddamn chain in his hand...oh, my GOD!! He wrapped it around the poor blond guy's throat and was choking him. Was he gonna kill the blond guy??? Suddenly, a tall lanky guy in a cowboy suit leaped into the ring and pulled baldy off of the blond guy. WHEW!! That was close, the poor guy could have been killed!!

Suddenly, I heard my Mother's voice: "PHILIP ROBERT IRWIN!! WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT OF BED!! I had been so excited about the weird boxing match that I had unwittingly crept up closer to the TV set, close enough so that my parents could see me...oh shit, I was gonna get my ass whipped. I started crying. Luckily, my old man was in a kind mood for once...he rescued me just like the cowboy had rescued the blond guy. "Oh Lila...let the boy watch wrestling", he said with a jolly voice. I squeezed onto the couch between the two of them. I felt special because I got to stay up late and watch guys fight while my sister (who was two years older) was in bed. It became a tradition in our home for me to sneak out of bed when I heard "wrestling" on the TV. It was the closest time of the week I spent with my parents, watching these guys hammer the dogshit out of each other. My parents would get so wrapped up in it that they forgot to be mean to me.

My Mother's favorite wrestler was the blond guy, "Pretty Pat Patterson". My old man and I leaned towards a scrappy, barrel-chested guy named "Ricky Hunter". But the meanest son of a bitch was the bald-headed bearded guy, who I later learned was called the "Mad Russian". He cheated a lot, and everybody hated him. My Mom yelled at him when he cheated, and so did my dear Daddy, a staid banker by day. Suddenly it made sense to me. I had heard my parents and sometimes even news guys wearing suits on TV talking about a place called Russia, where people were bad. No WONDER America hated Russia...the people that lived there fought dirty like the Mad Russian!

By the time I was in grade school, I had learned that the best part of the wrestling show was when the scary wrestlers yelled into the camera what they were going to do to the nice guys. The good guys reminded me of the boring preachers I had to listen to at church on Sunday. The bad guys made fun of them...they were cool. They weren't forced to go to church wearing a stupid itchy suit and a stubbly crew cut...they could do what they wanted. They made their own rules. That was what I wanted out of life. To be able to do what felt good instead of what the boring old Bible said we were supposed to do.

My parents were so involved with their church that they had no friends who didn't attend it. Almost all of my

Mother's relatives, including my aunts, uncles, and cousins, ALL went to the same church that we did. The only one who didn't was my uncle Lavern, who was an alcoholic. Alcoholics were lazy and mean, I was told. They would go to hell if they didn't stop drinking. Most of our neighbors swore and drank and danced and smoked and played cards and went to movies. My parents would occasionally talk to one of them, but not too often. They never invited them to our house. I wasn't allowed to invite them to our house, either. Hell, I wasn't even permitted to invite the neighborhood kids to our house for a birthday party. I never had a "real" birthday party, not even once. Oh, my parents would invite my cousins and aunts and uncles over, but I didn't really like them all that much. I'd be the center of attention for about 15 minutes on my own birthday, then the adults would sit around drinking coffee and gossip. I was expected to play with my cousins, or at the very least go to my room and entertain myself. There's a bunch of typical "loving", "caring" Christians for you.

I realized by the age of 9 that my relatives from my Father and Mother all the way down the line were not only fools for believing in a fictitious religion, they were assholes too. I couldn't wait to grow up and be my own boss. I had to suffer through a few more years of embarrassing Sunday school clothes, unwanted military haircuts, and beatings with belts, sticks , waffle iron cords, and fists before I finally was big enough physically to put my foot down and say NO!! Of course, I was still a huge fan of wrestling. Somewhere along the way, I had become an active rooter for the evil wrestlers...naturally. On Saturday night when my parents and I watched TV wrestling, they still cheered for the clean-cut "goody goody" guys. It was like I was living vicariously through the heel wrestlers. I loved the sinister tricks that they pulled on the naive, rube fan favorites. I could see the dirty tricks coming from a mile away, and I approved of them. At a tender age, I was already a heel in my heart and in my head.

I loved the sinister tricks that they pulled on the naive, rube fan favorites. I could see the dirty tricks coming from a mile away, and I approved of them. At a tender age, I was already a heel in my heart and in my head.

Even though my parents were sober, "intelligent" citizens who were registered voters and pillars of the church, they didn't really understand what was happening on the tube like I did. They screamed and yelled at the TV every week. Sometimes, when a bad guy like Bull Ramos, Sam Bass, Lonnie Mayne, or Beautiful Beauregard won the belt by cheating, my old man would get pissed at me sitting there cheering their victories. "You know", he'd say, trying to take the wind out of my sails, "it isn't real...it's all fake. I've heard they all go out to dinner or ride home together after the matches...they aren't REALLY hurting each other". This brilliant gem came from a mousy bank clerk who got redfaced and yelled at the TV set in spite of his "inside knowledge" that it was "fake". I thought to myself, "well, maybe they are staging it all", but watching the bad guys attacking the sickening, cleancut guys was the closest I got to actually retaliating against my family and all the hypocritical Christians. So what. It did hurt to watch a bad guy turn "good", though. I'd get terribly embarrassed and hope my parents didn't razz me. Even though I knew that the bad guys were probably only faking being "good" to sucker the good guys, it still was painful to watch.

Now, I am many years older and have been an "evil alcoholic" myself for many, many years...just like uncle Lavern, who has been dead a long time. Even though for the most part I put aside the playthings of my youth many years ago, and became a man with responsibilities, a wife, and a kid of my own to steer in one direction or the other, I still watch wrestling every week on television. Not only that, as of several years ago with the advent of the VHS recorder, I can tape all the wrestling shows on cable TV (including the one Pretty Pat Patterson works for) and watch them as often as I like. I can go to wrestling swapmeets and buy footage of almost any local wrestling promotion that has existed in the US since the 1950s. Through mail order services I can stay current on what's happening with any or all of the 18 major Japanese promotions, including those that promote insane matches involving barbed wire, piranha tanks, and live scorpions. There are now so many websites on the net devoted to wrestling rumors and "updates" by people who chase the wrestlers around hoping for a scoop on what to expect on the next wrestling show...well, if I wanted to and had the time I could spend every waking hour and STILL never see more than a portion of it.

Today, wrestling is drawing HUGE ratings on TV. Steve Austin T-shirts are the biggest selling T-shirts in mercantile history. Wrestlers make appearances on mainstream TV shows all the time. And, you know what??? Every goddamned time a wrestler DOES appear on a talk show, no matter how much the world has changed since the 1960's when I grew up, you'll still hear some smirking 130-pound host with his face caked with makeup, filming on a set built

HIT SQUAD

out of styrofoam, reading off of a teleprompter the very same "clever" question: "isn't it all fake??"

The truth is that all of television is "fake", including fake television studio sets and phony contrived "reality" shows like "Springer", where ordinary people are paid to pretend to treat their loved ones like shit in front of a live audience. How about "fake" news reports that sensationalize issues to attract ratings? The weather report you see is also "fake" very often, as far as I can tell...they like to exaggerate hazardous weather in order to boost the ratings. Furthermore, even though the weather, sports, and news people try to act educated, informed, and concerned, who out there in the audience is still naive enough to believe that they are not "fakes"?? Aren't they just talking heads hired for their appeal to targeted demographic groups??

The leading fastfood restaurant in the land serves "fake" non-dairy shakes. The food samples shown by all the leading chains in advertisements are always better than the "artificially flavored" slop they actually serve. They too are "fake", down to the "fake" happy greetings customers get from all their bored, minimum wage service employees. The leading books of our age are often "fake", having been written by crews of hired writers coached by the "name" author...who usually publishes under an assumed name.

The music industry is loaded, in fact BULGING OVER, with high salaried "fakes" who manipulate consumers and artists alike in more ways than I can possibly list here. From TOP TO BOTTOM it is FAKE...from millionaire veteran acts who dress up in "fake " dirty T-shirts and jeans to look like average folks, to middle class rappers dressing up in "fake" gangster costumes, to singers "faking" emotions in rehearsed, scripted video segments meant to look intensely real and sensitive...false anger...phony "sexbombs"...false "homosexual" appeal or, to turn it around, homosexuals pretending to be straight...former stars "faking" concern for a cause in an attempt to jumpstart their stalled careers...crooked contracts delivered to kids in bands by "fakes" hired to dress up like teenagers..."fake" satanic metal bands..."fake" political punk bands..."fake" tribute albums featuring cuts by bands that know little about the artist being celebrated..."fake" 1950's rockabilly duds..."fake" swing get ups...."fake" Deadheads who work in offices all week long, slipping into their phony $30 tie-dyed T-shirts on the weekends...100% "fake" dance music without an iota of non-programmed input...false praise written in zines by reviewers that "fake" having listened to it. The list goes on and on and on.

Football, baseball, and basketball players are told what kinds of clothes to wear, how to shave and cut their hair, and what opinions to express and when in order to perpetuate the false notion that athletes are virtuous heroes. HAH!!! And they play on phony grass, too. They are FAKES!! Don King rules boxing with an iron fist, and has been exposed as a "FAKE" by several of his former athletes. The entire sport from top to bottom is geared toward gambling—PERIOD!!!—NOT ATHLETICISM!! Yet boxing fans tend to be among the most cocky of the jerks who point fingers at pro wrestling and label it as "fake".

Now, let's examine YOU for a minute, if you have the guts. You have the nerve to sneer at the wrestlers' transparent "gimmicks"?? Well, let me ask you Jack...WHAT'S YOUR GIMMICK?? When you were nothing but a snotnosed kid, you undoubtedly learned to work either the "spare change crusty punk" angle or the "jock" angle or the "angry young feminist" bit...which was it??? You know what??? You weren't very good at it...you never fooled thee WHISKEY REBEL. Of course, after you grew up a bit and left high school you soon learned that in order to get by in the ADULT world you need to come up with a different angle to work. Most young people eventually adapt a "fan favorite" stance...they dress conservatively and behave themselves whenever they're in contact with the law, or the student loan officer, or another authority figure. They gradually learn that to work a "babyface" angle, you need to concentrate on never letting your hostile or negative or anti-social side show. Some young adults choose to work a "hip" angle, like maybe the "cause oriented" routine...you know...holding hands in a circle crying at the latest candlelight vigil. Is this your "angle"? Or have you adapted the "art student" angle, where you buffalo everybody into thinking you have artistic "vision" so you don't have to work for a living? Maybe you're one of these "I don't have an angle" tough guys. I say HOGWASH!! Even your plain white T-shirt and straightleg Levi's are as much a costume as if YOU WORE IT INTO A WRESTLING RING. If you actually DID walk into the squared circle in your "I don't have a gimmick" duds, it WOULD STILL be seen as a gimmick, albeit not a very original one. A lot of you fat slobs out there sit around on your asses all day long working an "injury" angle in order to collect workmans comp or a disability check. Yet you're the first to cry "foul" when you see a "fake" injury on a TV wrestling show. One of the reasons I can see through YOUR GIMMICK is the fact that I realize that in order to survive high school, or a job in an office or a construction gig, or even to work the foodstamp leech route, EVERYBODY uses gimmicks. Most of them are downright transparent, when you come right down to it.

OH YEAH, I KNOW, "thee WHISKEY REBEL" is a fucking gimmick. But no more so than when I was a three-piece suit wearing corporate manager for a year or so back in the 80s.

Not long ago, I read that WWF champion Mick Foley "Mankind" was asked on TV how much of wrestling is fake. He replied that it was all real, and he was telling the truth. I'm not sure how many of you will be able to grasp what I'm saying here, but think it over. Crack open a few beers and watch a couple of hours of wrestling on TV and you'll see what I mean. You can fucking bet that the average pro wrestler is more dedicated than the people you see on your job working the slurpee machine at 7-11 every day. I have met a few wrestlers, and I'll guarantee you that every single one I've ever met has gone through 100 times more hell to be where he is than almost anybody you've ever met in any occupation. I suppose that the training doctors and cops go through is comparable. Whenever a pro wrestler laces up his boots and walks that aisle, he risks serious

WHISKEYREBEL

injury. Most of you nostril-mining dummies never risk anything more hazardous than a gut ache from packing your belly with ice cream while watching "Oprah". Granted that some wrestling injuries are "works", but a helluva lot of them are not. A wrestler never knows when his number is going to come up...when he might blow out a knee or injure his back and be unable to support himself and his loved ones. These fears cause many wrestlers to be boring and plain unless they work an angle of some sort to create a little audience heat. Of course there's a contingent of hardcore wrestlers in the business today who risk all sorts of legitimately dangerous moves. WHY?? Because they are fans of the sport like me. There's few cooler sights to see on our planet than two dudes bashing each other over the head with a flaming barbed wire baseball bat. Even if they pull their punches, they're gonna get fucked up anyway. You and I never really know where the "work" ends and the brutality begins. There is a "brotherhood" between wrestlers that you and I are not privy to but which is as old as the sport itself. You may THINK you know what's going to happen in the ring, but you really don't in the long run.

It kinda disgusts me when I see so many wrestling fans so obsessed these days with being "in the know"...whatever that means. It is geeks like them that make it almost embarrassing for me to "defend" wrestling, since I DON"T WANT TO BE "IN THE KNOW"!!! I just want to enjoy it for what it is to me: one of the earliest sources of entertainment I ever found, a sport that provided me with my first heel "role models", and the only hobby I've enjoyed throughout my life. If thee WHISKEY REBEL never picked up a guitar again and if my computer and books and records were all taken away, as long as I had a TV set to watch wrestling on a couple times a week, I'd manage to get by. I therefore salute all wrestlers, present and past.

Whatever the hell you do for a living, whatever lifestyle you have bought into, whatever views you spout off to your kids or to your coffee clatch or to your Monday night football buddies, I bet I could expose you in five fucking minutes flat. So don't dare point your finger at a guy who's missing half an ear and several teeth and who hunches over when he walks while wincing in pain. Don't ASK HIM if he's a fake. If you wanna see a "phony", just look in the mirror. Honestly examine yourself and that petty, artificial existence you call a "lifestyle", then do the rest of us a favor and shut the fuck up.

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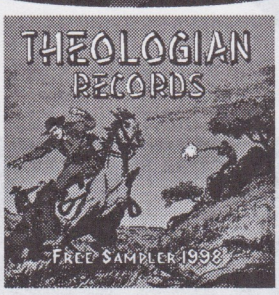
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BEN WEASEL VS Jesse Michaels

Ben: OK, I'm sitting here with the elusive Jesse Michaels, formerly of Operation Ivy. He was the singer and primary lyricist in that band. That band broke up, and he seemed to drop off the face of the earth. Now, in a shameless display of self-promotion, we're talking to him because he has a new band, called Common Rider, that's releasing a record on Panic Button, which is my label. So, what have you been up to for the past ten years?

Jesse: Well, nothing too fancy. I've done a couple semesters at different colleges, I have worked various jobs, I studied Buddhism for a little while, and I have played some music, but not in any formal band-type setting.

Ben: But I know you did more than that in ten years. The one thing you did was Big Rig, which was more of a project, whereas this is a real band.

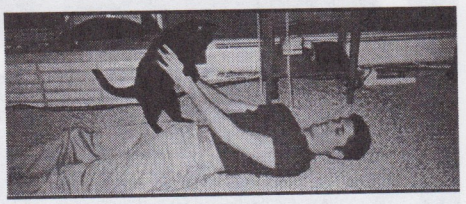
Jesse: Right.

Ben: But, other than that, you haven't been heard from musically. What about studying Buddhism? There's crazy rumors about you, so we want to clear them up.

Jesse: As far as Buddhism goes, I was never really a monk, but for a period of about one year I studied Buddhism at the San Francisco Zen Center, just for my own personal enrichment.

Ben: One of the things I know is that you had a pamphlet that I think you said you handed out at shows because so many people were coming up and asking you about being a monk, since there was that famous photo of you in *Harper's* magazine wearing a big, long robe. You came up with a little pamphlet about meditation, which was a really simple, secular, nonreligious thing. Do you still maintain meditation practice?

Jesse: Yeah, I still practice meditation, but like you said, in a very nonreligious fashion. For me, it's just a very simple practice that helps you lead a better life, and also helps you in your treatment of other people, hopefully. Something like Tai Chi or martial arts, just something to do that helps you lead a deeper and more fulfilling life, rather than a



major religious involvement.
Ben: So you were in the Zen center for a year. I know you were in Florida for a while. You did some community college. You also went through some hard times as well, right?
Jesse: That's correct.
Ben: Do you feel comfortable talking about them?
Jesse: Yeah, I can talk about that without getting too deeply into it. I basically went through a period of my life where I drank a whole lot.
Ben: (laughter) I'm sorry, I'm holding a beer.
Jesse: To make a long story short, or maybe I should make a short story long, I'm not sure.
Ben: Yeah, let's take up space in the magazine.
Jesse: All right. Basically, I drank too much. I don't really know what to say about it. It was never very colorful, it's just that I went through a difficult time in my early- to mid-twenties, as I think a lot of people do, and one of the ways I dealt with it was by drinking. Since then, I have made big changes in my life. In fact, I no longer drink, although I am not doctrinaire about not drinking. I'm not straight edge or anything like that. But, it's just a matter of where, yes, for a while I drank a whole lot, and now I don't. It's much better this way.
Ben: And let it be known that the tape can't see this, but I'm smoking a cigarette and drinking a beer right now, and he's not knocking it out of my hand or growling at me or anything.
Jesse: Yeah, I hang out at bars, I'm very low key about the whole thing.
Ben: What do you drink when you hang out at a bar and you don't drink alcohol?
Jesse: I drink club sodas with limes.
Ben: Wow, that was decisive! OK, let's talk about Operation Ivy, an influential band, obviously. A lot of people were influenced by the band itself, and also by that time in the late '80s, and what was going on at Gilman and with Lookout, and to a certain extent, that magazine that I can't remember the name of that really sucks now in San Francisco. It was a pretty short-lived band. You did a seven inch, you did a tour, you did an album, and then you broke up,



THERE'S A POPULAR IDEA THAT SOMEONE WHO'S AN ENTERTAINER OR IS IN THE ARTS ISN'T ENTERTAINING OR ISN'T IN THE ARTS FOR THE PERIOD OF TIME THAT THEY'VE DISAPPEARED, WHEN IN FACT THEY JUST MIGHT BE DOING DIFFERENT THINGS WITH THEIR LIFE.

but it sold probably—I'm guessing now—close to half a million copies, so it's like this major, successful, influential album. Kids have tattoos of the logos and everything all over their legs and arms and buttocks and things. So, naturally, people are asking themselves why you broke up. There are people in the punk rock scene that do know why, and know that it's really because of mundane, boring reasons, but with Operation Ivy, because it's a legendary band, people attach more importance to it. Especially since you've been so elusive. So, what do you have to say about that? Why did the band break up, or why did it come and go so quickly?

Jesse: OK, first of all, I've never been elusive, I just haven't been playing in bands. That's a misconception. There's a popular idea that someone who's an entertainer or is in the arts isn't entertaining or isn't in the arts for the period of time that they've disappeared, when in fact they just might be doing different things with their life. As far as Operation Ivy goes, the reasons we broke up just weren't all that interesting. Just a lot of arguments that came up, to be honest I have to take responsibility for my part in it, insofar as I was a much more egotistical and difficult person than I am now, I hope. I certainly have never felt resentment over it. We just had some problems and it was time to move on. And I still look back on the times of Operation Ivy with a lot of fondness, and I consider it to be a formative and very happy period of my life. But basically, not every relationship is meant to last forever, and I think that was the case with Operation Ivy.

Ben: I hate band interviews where they sit and talk about goofy shit, but at the same time, people are so interested in you because you do seem to be this mysterious character, whether it's really true or not. What do you do for kicks? What's a day in the life of Jesse Michaels like?

Jesse: Well, It varies a lot from month to month. I have a very short term memory, so it's very hard for me to take a survey of my life. If you asked me what I was doing a year ago, I literally and quite honestly can't remember. But, I like movies, I exercise a lot, I snowboard, and I also spend at least four or five hours a day alone. I'm a person who loves solitude. That's a lot of the reason I'm not always eager to jump into the public eye, because the source of my personal strength, and also whatever strength my music has, derives from quietness and solitude. So that's a big part of my life, and also explains my interest in meditation. I do a lot of art, too.

Ben: Jesse is involved artistically with his new band, and did the front and back cover of their album, and then the drummer, Dan Lumley, did the illustrations that go along with the songs.

Jesse: Right. My whole lifestyle, and what I like to do with my life—and I don't mind talking about it, really—is to spend a lot of time with silence, or going within and exploring the more quiet sides of life, and then to interact with other people, hopefully bringing some of that insight into hanging out with other people. I'm not a recluse, but at the same time, I'm not a social butterfly. I like to strike a balance.

Ben: On a personal level, it sounds like because of the way you interact with people, people are more inspired by the way you actually conduct yourself. Perhaps that's better than saying "well, this is what you should do, and this is what you shouldn't do".

Jesse: Well, you haven't seen me on a bad day.

Ben: You don't want to address every rumor, but one of the big rumors about Operation Ivy was that some of the other guys in the band wanted to become more of a big-time band, and that Jesse Michaels was the "punk rock guy" who wanted to do everything at a grassroots level. That's a rumor that's just sort of taken on a life of its own, but it's not really the case, is it?

Jesse: No, that's basically complete mythology. In fact, I have no moral qualms about bands becoming more successful or doing things outside the confines of a strictly underground setting. As a matter of fact, a lot of my friends are now in highly successful bands. I don't think I really need to list them, but a lot of them have become rock stars, and I'm basically proud of them and very happy for them. So that whole idea that I was some kind of spokesman for garage-based punk rock is a myth that doesn't reflect who I am at all.

Ben: So, the band breaks up, and you go and do a bunch of different things with your life, and at one point in '92, you do the Big Rig EP on Lookout. Since then, you haven't done anything musically, at least that's been released to the public. You have a new band, you're about to mix the album. It's called "Last Wave Rockers" and is a 14-song album. I've heard it, I know how great it is. Why now?

Jesse: This might be worth mentioning. For a long time playing music made me so depressed that I couldn't even consider being in a band, because I would pick up the guitar and play, and then I would go through terrible depressions. Sometimes I would even jam with people, and afterwards I would be so unhappy and mentally fucked-up that I couldn't even consider being in a band. At some point that shifted, and I suddenly was freed up emotionally in such a way that I could do something musically. So, that was a lot of my motivation. All of a sudden I felt like OK, I was trying to force it before, but now I really feel like this is something I want to do and it's going to be fun. That's the personal

side of it. The more worldly side is that right now, looking at the world around me, and also at the music scene around me, I have a feeling that people could use these songs. Not that my songs are better than anyone else's, but just that I do have something to say and there's a lot of people out there that want to hear it.
Ben: A lot of people might be surprised or disappointed, although frankly I was elated, that there's not any ska on this record at all. There's a lot of reggae influence, and a lot of almost straight up reggae songs, there's a lot of punk songs, there's a lot of poppy punk songs, and to me it sounds like almost a logical extension of Operation Ivy with lyrics that are even better, because you've had ten years now under your belt to sort of have more experiences and learn how to write better, and musically, it's less haphazard. Of course, the Operation Ivy record is a classic, but at this point it seems like everything has sort of come together and, certainly, having read the lyrics, it is in many cases something where you really have something to say. How much of it was really just your recognition that you had something to say and that now would be the time to say it?
Jesse: Well, it's a case where I feel like I've become more emotionally alive with maturity, so the songs are much more emotional, they're much more emotionally rich. The album is about half love songs, and as you said, the music is moving from the hyperactive ska tempo to a more rock steady tempo. In the songwriting process, I was very influenced by Toots and the Maytalls, and by other music from the rocksteady period. I think that no matter what I write, I'll always be influenced by Jamaican music, because I just love it. Whereas in Operation Ivy, speaking personally, I was more influenced by stuff from the Two Tone period of English ska. As far as the songwriting, part of the reason I chose to include a lot of love songs, and part of the reason I've gone in that direction, is quite frankly because I think that the world needs a little bit of tenderness right now. We live in extremely cynical times, and I think that one of the most rebellious things you can do in a time when people are afraid to feel is to feel and to actually express feelings regardless of what people think of you. If you look at a lot of Jamaican music, or any kind of music from Third World countries, they have everything in the world to complain about, but the music's always pretty joyful. There is a lot of very revolutionary reggae, but actually, I'm much more inspired by the uplifting and celebratory aspects of reggae music.
Ben: Do you see yourself primarily as a songwriter? Because you actually play guitar on this, whereas you didn't in Operation Ivy. You played guitar on it, and I know you downplay your guitar- playing ability, but it's really good. And you sing, and of course everybody knows you're a good singer, and you wrote all the songs. How do you view yourself?
Jesse: Well, I do see myself as a songwriter. Right now that's my life, that's my main means of artistic expression. And that's a big change from all the bands I played in in the past because usually in the past, I've collaborated in some way. For the record, I pretty much wrote everything. That's something I'm really comfortable with, and I think I've sort of found myself as a musician.
Ben: I absolutely agree. Knowing now that you weren't the elusive Jesse Michaels and that you were around, and that in the past ten years you have been to punk rock shows, and that you have at least peripherally kept in touch with what's been happening in underground music, specifically with punk rock, what do you see that's changed for the better and what do you see that's changed for the worse? I think it would be interesting to learn the perspective of a guy who was in this incredibly influential band and then chose basically not to play music publicly for so long. I certainly know, and everybody's talked this subject to death, but what's your feeling on it? What's the good and what's the bad, compared to ten years ago?
Jesse: To be quite frank, I really don't care that much. And I don't mean that to say something against punk rock, but I don't identify with it the way that I used to. If I had to pin down something, I would say that obviously punk is larger, and that there's good and bad aspects of that.
Ben: We've talked about things like the balance between sexuality, on one hand, and danger—there's always this controlled danger at good punk shows. Nobody usually gets seriously hurt, but it isn't completely non-threatening. I'm not really asking how your band fits into that, but more about how you view that whole dynamic. Do you think that it's become more Pat Boone-ish and wimpy and non-threatening?
Jesse: If anything, it's become preachier. At some levels, it's become preachier, and at other levels, it's become less threatening, like you said.
Ben: But not threatening in a sense of violence, but threatening in the sense of challenging people with ideas.
Jesse: Yes. A lot of punk rock obviously is a lot less exciting.
(Everyone in the room is nodding in agreement.)
Jesse: However, there are still a lot of great bands. Dillinger Four are great, Teen Idols are great, New Bomb Turks are great. Even in the ska scene, even though ska has gotten so big and trendy and there's a lot of crappy bands and everything, there's great

WE LIVE IN EXTREMELY CYNICAL TIMES, AND I THINK THAT ONE OF THE MOST REBELLIOUS THINGS YOU CAN DO IN A TIME WHEN PEOPLE ARE AFRAID TO FEEL IS TO FEEL AND TO ACTUALLY EXPRESS FEELINGS REGARDLESS OF WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF YOU.

ska bands. I'm really excited about the bands that are playing roots-type ska like the Blue Beats, or like Hepcat. There's really exciting music out there, but I think it kind of depends on what aspects you look at. Personally, I like a lot of other types of music as much, if not more, than punk rock, so it's not my mainstay. But if I had to be pinned down, I'd say that in many ways, it's become more bland. Also, there's a lot more PC preachiness than there used to be. But by and large, there are still a lot of great bands and a lot of exciting stuff happening.

Ben: You recorded this album in Chicago with a couple of guys who also play in my band, Mass and Dan, and made kind of an interesting choice for a producer. I used him on our last album as well, and I know that's not why you used him. It seemed to come together in such a great way, where all these elements fit together in a thing that by all rights should have just not have worked out.

Jesse: I have been remarkably lucky, or whatever you want to call it. Without getting too new age, sometimes things just seem to happen because they're meant to happen. For example, I taught Mass and Lumley 14 songs in three days, and they nailed them. Brendon was able to completely understand what I was talking about when I said I wanted a raw sound but not a trashy sound, which is a rarity these days. A lot of people, when they hear the word "raw" they think in terms of very advanced studio techniques, a sort of processed rawness. But Brendon, because he grew up listening to the Stooges and really was involved with a lot of punk stuff, he knew what I was talking about and he helped us to achieve that. We also had a couple of people come in and do sax stuff and organ stuff who were just incredible musicians, but at the same time were able to get into the right frame of mind for the simplicity of the songs. And for what it's worth, if anyone out there is recording an album, I can tell you right now that the key to recording is organization. Because a lot of the reason that everything went so well is because I had the songs so well-structured and written, and I knew all the parts that I wanted people to be able to play. Thus we were able to do something that involved 8 or 9 musicians, and do it successfully in a period of nine days. And we're talking about 15 songs, which is kind of an accomplishment, especially in this day and age, when punk bands take as long as eight weeks to record a record.

Ben: Yeah, they'll spend a $100,000 on a record.

Jesse: So we're well organized, and I've been working on the songs for a long time. I know the songs are good. Whether that's egotistical or not, fuck it. It came out really well, and I think we were able to incorporate the other musicians without it turning into a concept album or a VH1 special.

Ben: This is a real band, it's not a project. It's an actual band. The album will come out May 25th, on Panic Button/Lookout. Just as an aside, we know that Lookout has been incredibly supportive and really great about the whole thing, and has had a really good level of involvement in it as well, because obviously they have ties with you going back years. What happens after the record is done and released? Then what do you do?

Jesse: Basically, right now, after the record is done, I'm going to go somewhere and forget about music completely for about two to three weeks, and then I'll probably start writing more material so that when we play live, I'll have enough songs to pull it off. As far as touring, when and where we're going to start playing, it's up in the air only because I don't live in Chicago right now, so there's a lot of things to figure out, as far as whether or not I'm going to move and how the logistics of the whole thing are going to work out. So, there's nothing chiseled in stone yet, but we're definitely going to continue on some level.

Ben: Is it fair to say that you're back?

Jesse: Well, you could say that if you wanted to, though I don't think I ever went anywhere.

Ben: But you're back musically as far as releasing stuff, and you're not going away any time soon.

Jesse: Well, I'm not making any promises.

Ben: Make a promise! I'm trying to sell fucking records here, god damnit! Make a promise. You're going to play Dallas, Texas on September 14th, 1999. One of the things I love about the record is that there's certain phrases that are repeated in other songs. Sometimes it only happens once, and sometimes it happens a couple of times, but "Last Wave Rockers" is a phrase in particular, and another is "Classics Of Love", which repeatedly comes up. It's really cool, but why?

Jesse: "Last wave rockers" sounded cool. A lot of the point of songwriting is to put something in words that you can't explain. So, when asked to explain it, I'm at a loss. But if I had to say something to explain the overall theme of the record, I would say that the theme revolves around a group of people, not necessarily punk rockers or rebels, people that have been disappointed by the modern world, who are returning to values of the heart and the emotions. People who feel a need for warmth in these modern times.

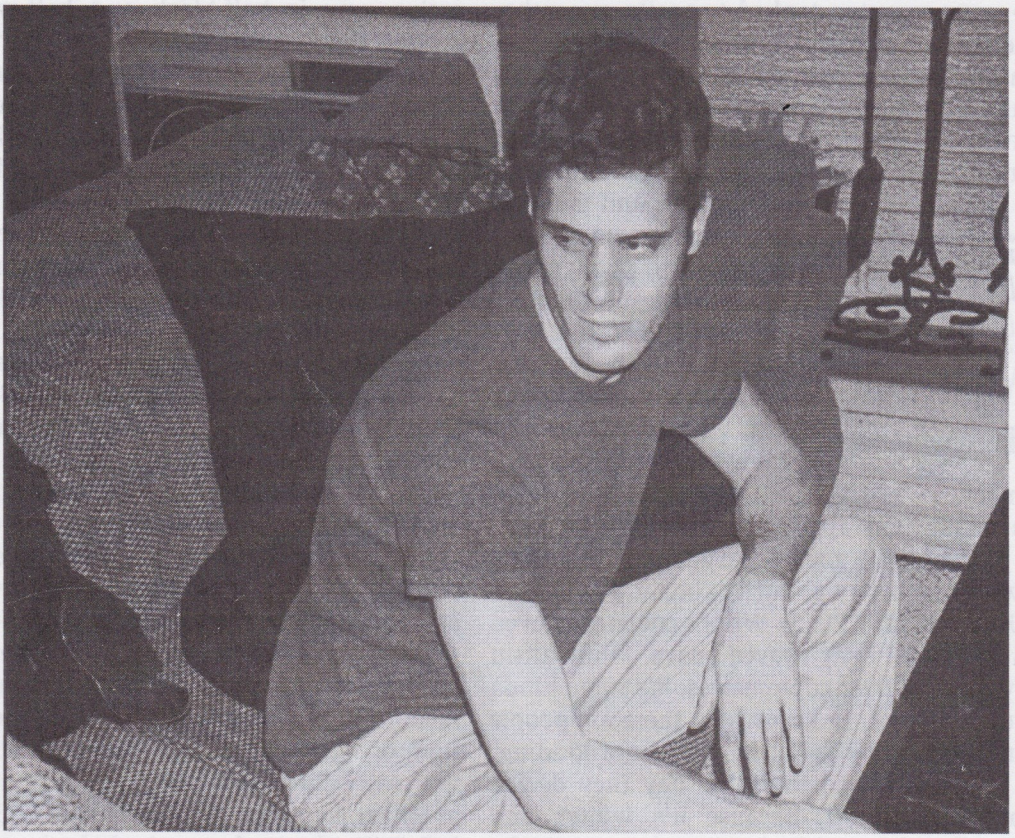
Ben: So, even though you're talking about things like heart and warmth and peace and things like that, it's still ultimately a punk rock spirit in the sense that it's elitist in a good way.

Jesse: Well, no.

Ben: Don't disagree with me, I'm interviewing you!

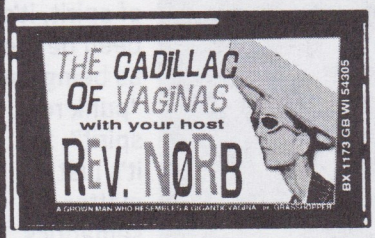
THE MUSIC I WRITE IS FOR EVERYBODY. I CONSIDER IT SOMETHING THAT I'M GOOD AT THAT I'M OFFERING TO ANYONE THAT LIKES IT. SOME PEOPLE MIGHT GET ONE THING, AND OTHER PEOPLE MIGHT GET ANOTHER, BUT AS LONG AS THEY ENJOY IT THEN IT'S SUCCESSFUL.

(Laughter)
Jesse: When I say a group of people, I'm not talking about punk rockers.
Ben: I'm not talking about punk rock, either. What I'm saying is that it's elitist in the sense that you're either going to get it and be at the right point in your life when you get it, or you're not going to get it.
Jesse: I wouldn't say it's elitist, I'd say it's universal.
Ben: But there are a lot of people who won't get it.
Jesse: Hmmm...maybe so.
Ben: Edit all this out! Edit it all out, because I'm starting to look like a jackass!
Jesse: Well, what the fuck?
Ben: I don't want you to lie.
Jesse: OK.
Ben: No, but when I use the word elitist, I mean it in a good sense. I don't mean it in a snobbish sense, like this is our club, and you're not allowed in. I mean it in the sense of laying it out there and saying this is what it is, and if you don't get it, fine, maybe you're not ready to get it, or maybe I'm so fucked up that I think you should be getting something that you shouldn't be getting. But either way, there are some people who will get it, and some who won't. So, it's not a "right" or "wrong" thing or a snobby thing at all, but simply that I think you're conveying certain values that are definitely going to speak to a lot of people. To the people that it doesn't speak to, I'm not necessarily saying fuck 'em, they're not ready for it yet. And that's how I made the connection to punk rock as the way it was ten years ago, where it attracted weirdoes and freaks and rejects from society and the type of people that didn't fit in, not because they chose not to fit in, but because they just couldn't manage to do it. I think that that's the theme. I know that you don't like to be restricted to the confines of punk rock, but at the same time there's a spirit there that really evokes that, and it really hearkens back to Operation Ivy, I think, in a lot of ways. In all the right ways, the positive ways.
Jesse: Right. Well, the music I write is for everybody. I consider it something that I'm good at that I'm offering to anyone that likes it. Some people might get one thing, and other people might get another, but as long as they enjoy it then it's successful. And it doesn't matter if that person is a rich person, or a poor person, or a punk rocker, or someone who has never even heard of punk rock. As a matter of fact, I think a lot of the stuff on this record will appeal to a wider group of people than Operation Ivy did, without losing any of the sense of intensity.
Ben: The common thread, going back to my efforts to hook it up with Operation Ivy, the one thing that's similar is the spirit of it. And the spirit of it is genuine and sincere, and I think that that's one of the things that I find fascinating in somebody your age. (For those of you who don't know, Jesse is 29 years old.) There is a punk rock spirit, in that sense.
Jesse: If you want to say so, you can say whatever you want, but what you're saying really has nothing to do with me. Like I said before, the record is for everybody. If you want to talk about punk rock, that's fine. Frankly, I don't really give a shit, because it's not particularly my life.
Ben: I don't mean it in the sense of there being a punk scene or anything like that, but for lack of a better term for that type of spirit, it's been defined as being the "punk rock spirit". So, it's just a matter of semantics. Melanie says it's rebellious in a positive way, which is a good observation.
Jesse: Look, the message of music is basically love. That's where I'm at now. It might sound corny, or it might sound hippyish or whatever. But that's the way I'd put it, and anyone else who wants to put it differently by calling it punk rock or something else, I don't really give a shit. This may be an interview cliche which has already been used by a million bands, because I think a million songwriters have been put in this very same position, but it's not my job to categorize music, it's my job to write songs. I don't think I'm Paul McCartney, but I think I'm pretty decent at it, so I do it, and I offer it to people because I think it makes people happy. Beyond that, people can say whatever the fuck they want. Interviews are really difficult, because the point of music is really nonverbal, and it's emotional and it's spiritual, and it involves the expression of joy, and hopefully it touches people on a deeper level than normal language and helps them to have a better life and get through the day. ⊕



HIT SQUAD

Somebody like a philosophy professor or Famous Old Fruity Dude or something like that once postulated that it was Art that set man apart from the lesser animals (although i spent my college years way too tanked to really remember much in the way of factual details in cases like these, i'm speculating that the guy who originally had this thought was of Germanic heritage, as the majority of the great Fruity Old Thinker Dudes who thought about art were krauts, primarily because the German word for "art" is "kunst," which sounds dirty, and is therefore much more conducive to begetting heavy thought than its English language equivalent, which merely evokes memories of the guy who cut a fart and blew Gene-Gene and Joe-Joe's machine apart); i.e., without the human capacity to create and appreciate art, we'd be little more than, as the saying goes, "shaved apes" (not to be confused with our happy-go-lucky cousin, the shaved beaver. QUICK HITLIST POLL: What's cooler, a shaved beave or a boob job? I say shaved beave. Minimalism must always prevail over copiousness, it's some kinda rule of nature. Further, ya know how there are people in this world who grow facial hair [i'm not kidding! this really happens!], and then one day they decide they wanna shave it off, because it's winter, and they're sick of liquid snot dripping into their mustache and freezing into tiny green icicles or whatever, so they hack exactly half their beard off, and then get some dolt to take their picture midway thru the shaving process, then shave the rest, and develop and display the freak-ass picture of themselves with half a beard for pretty much the rest of their lives, like anyone really wants to see this shit? Well, does anyone out there know of any girls who had a picture taken of themselves with exactly half their bush removed? Or, better yet, shaved half the beave and just left it that way? I mean, holy fuck, chicks drive hunks of pointy metal thru their nipples and their clitorises and every other god damn thing these days, you'd think somebody'd apply a little creativity to the whole "make your sex organs look really fucking daffy" process...maybe it's too ska? I dunno. All i know is that the pornographical implications of such a tonsorial wack-out are staggering; here's a brand-new smut niche market that has not begun to be exploited! Profits galore! 1-900-HALF-MUF! $3.99 a minute! Kids, get your parents' permission before calling! C'mon, ladies! Work with me here! Your steadfast refusal to humor me is depriving me of my God-given right to profit off the pubic hairs of others in the American Free Enterprise System!!! And, speaking of the Enterprise, if i could get one aspiring starlet to demi-shave the beave [i guess Demi Moore wouldn't be too bad a call] [Ow! I half to stop making jokes like that] stage left, and a second to demi-shave the beave stage right, i could re-make the infamous episode of Star Trek™ where Frank Gorshin is half-white and half-black, and his arch-enemy is half-black and half-white, and they run around the Enterprise with the camera all blurry and kill each other [i think it was one of those episodes with a moral, but said moral was far too complex for my twentieth-century noggin to figger out. I think the moral might have been "don't quit your Riddler gig, Frankie"], except with nude women fighting over some kind of beave-o-centric race squabble. "Inferior left-shaven bitch!" etc...eventually, the catfighting would lead into a three-way sex scene involving Two-Face from the Batman movies, who might do well to explain how his being black in the first one and white in the third one relates to the Frank Gorshin/John Astin conundrum. But i digress). Fair enough. However, merely differentiating man from his simian cousins is hardly a particularly revelatory act; i mean, shit, even Bill Stevenson knows he's a human, not an ape — there really isn't that much challenge to such an activity. What would be a far more useful differentiation to be able to make is Who are humanity's masters, and who are the low-life piece-of-shit drone-ass motherfuckers? (NOTE: The preceding twelve-to-sixteen words were in italics when i typed them. I point this out because i seem to recall my prior column being quite devoid of all italicization, of which, i am sure, there initially was plenty. I cannot really check this out in my own copy of the first issue of Hitlist, however, because NOBODY BOTHERED TO SEND ME ONE. That's okay, nobody bothered to send me a copy of the vinyl on my band's new record either. Nor did anyone bother to send me a copy of the Lookout sampler we're on, nor the Go-Kart sampler we're on that'd one'd have to slither into frickin' HOT TOPIC™ to otherwise acquire. Why do i think i'm entitled to all this free shit, anyway? What do i have, balls of brass??? There are oppressed peoples in Cambodia and so forth that have to, like, go to the bathroom in front of each other and stuff! And here i am, whining because i didn't get copies of stuff i'll probably be able to pluck out of the dollar box at any record store in America in six to eight months! I shame me! [it pleases me to note that there are no Hot Topic™ stores in the greater Green Bay metropolitan area; however, i was briefly enduring the Hot Topic™ in Appleton, Wisconsin {figures} to look at the comp that my band is on, and i'm kinda lookin' around, you know, the Disapproving Elder Scenester type, and i'm going fuuuuuck, this place is YUCKY, and i'm starting to feel lame about being on a comp that is exclusively sold in such a den of iniquity and sixteen-dollar CR@$$ t-shirts, and i'm tasting the brackish twang of the black sperm of shame beginning to gurgle up from my throat, and i'm like, man, this is LAME! This is GIMP!! This is...well...GAY!!! ...and i'm readin' the back, lookin' at the names of all these other fellow LAME and GIMP and GAY bands who we're on the comp with, and all of a sud-



den i see that, of all the "Not Ready For Mall-Rock" bands to be on this comp with us, the fuckin' CANDY SNATCHERS are on it! So i'm like, hmm, shit, if a band that cuts themselves up with broken glass onstage, et cetera, et cetera, can get away with being on this ditzy mall-comp, a bunch of over-caffeinated dorks like us who never really stood for anything but Free SweeTarts™ and Something To Do™ can SURELY emerge without accruing a significant allocation of shame! And, thus buoyed, i continued to read the track listings — and just about made pee-pee in my pants when i saw that there was an ANTI-FLAG song on there as well. SINCE I DO NOT HAVE A COPY, i am unsure as to how their song goes; i presume the lyrics are something like "You gotta DIE! DIE! DIE! For your government!!! SHOP! SHOP! SHOP! At Hot Topic™!!!" How totally demeaning. I love it])

This question, in so many words, has been addressed many times over in the merry discourse that is Western thought: There's Nietzche's (you know, Ray Nietzche, the guy who used to play middle linebacker for the Packers) Man vs. Superman, Jose Ortega y Gasset's "Mass Man" vs. "Superior Man," A. Hitler's "Master Race" vs. "Doomed Fucks", G. Roddenberry's "Half-White, Half-Black Frank Gorshin vs. Half-Black, Half-White Other Dude," R. Nørb's "Chick w/Left Half of Beave Shaved Off vs. Chick w/Right Half of Beave Shaved Off," Rational Man vs. Dumbass, and Santa Claus vs. the Martians. There is the superior strata of humanity, and there is the Phlegm (meaning no disrespect to the Flemish, you understand). It is my assertion that everybody — except the very most sit-in-the-desert-and-eat-peyote-and-contemplate-my-own-insignificance hippie types — views the world in terms of Drone-Ass Dumbshit Motherfuckers and The Enlightened Few, with the rhetorical question before us being What model of delineation supplies the proper criterion for Wheat-Man to be separated from Chaff-Man? How do we extract Marijuana-Man from Seed-and-Stem-Man? How are we able to remove the Spam™ Jelly of humanity from the Spam™ itself??? Needless to say, none of the aforementioned recipes for sifting out the phlegm really work; i mean, by many of the more reputable loser-vs-hotshot schema, i, Reverend Nørb, am on the phlegm side of the equation. I REFUSE TO BUY INTO ANY SORT OF PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEM WHERE I AM ONE OF THE PHLEGM!!! IT'S BAD GODDAMN FORM!!! Shocking as this may seem, this planet is teeming with humans who, by many standard criteria of superiorness, are, in fact Kicking My Ass. They are orders of magnitude more successful than i am. They are more fulfilled. Happier. More Self-Actualized. I don't even know what "Self-Actualized" means, so, obviously, they have me at a great disadvantage. Some, believe it or don't, have larger comic book collections and penises than i have. I mean, there goes the ace in the hole, ya know??? However! In my heart of hearts, my faith in the continued well-being of my superiority complex has never wavered, as i know that I ROCK and THEY PROBABLY DON'T. THIS, then, is the crux of humanity's great demarcation! The root of our great partition! The basis for deciding who rules the roost with kung-fu grip, and who has to run for smokes and handle the phones in our New World Order! IT IS ROCKER vs. UNROCKER, like a mad furniture fight at the old folks' home, that PROPERLY ALIENATES THE ÜBERMENSCH, of which i would like to think there is at least one of, FROM THE SPUD (Note: This does not involve sending any money to the Church of the SubGenius, please feel free to continue). That established to my satisfaction, the next question is Who rocks and who doesn't??? Obviously, every mullet-headed brain surgeon and gold-chain-bedecked clown emitting salvos of ludicrous, bone-jarring noises from their cornball car stereii think they rock, but do they really? Methinks not. One doesn't have to be particularly fleet of thought to realize that these simps are a bunch o' ludicrous dorks — essentially, less-than-human, or more correctly, merely human — laughable clods whom we snicker at as they rumble past, though not so's they'd notice and beat us up or pop a couple caps in our ass (i'm gonna do the world a favor and make a fortune off these silly bastards: I'm gonna invent the world's first nuclear powered car stereo. I'm gonna call it the "Muthafucka 3000™," and it's gonna be powered by its own mini fusion reactor. It's gonna cost so much, people will have to steal entire houses to pay for it. It will be so low and so loud that you'll be able to tell it's coming not only by the swell thumping and bumping noises it's blanketing the city with, but by watching mailboxes, lawn ornaments, traffic signals and small children being uprooted and hurled away from the road as a vehicle so equipped passes. It's gonna be made out of two-inch thick lead to appear to deter theft, to limit the amount of radiation that seeps into the passenger chamber, and to become properly effective driver-killing shrapnel when the reactor blows up, which will happen between the first six to eight hours of use. Of course, being one of the superior

Obviously, every mullet-headed brain surgeon and gold-chain-bedecked clown emitting salvos of ludicrous, bone-jarring noises from their cornball car stereii think they rock, but do they really?

strata of humanity, Rocking Man, i will heed my moral compulsions and make the purchaser well aware of the fact that the Muthafucka 3000™ will eventually blow his ass to gravy; in all likelihood more sooner than later. I suspect it will not matter overmuch. I mean, dude! This is the most kickin' fly peachy system ever! WHAT? You're balking because you don't wanna spend forty-eight thousand dollars on a car stereo that's gonna kill you in six to eight hours, even though it's better than your friends' stereos? What, you can't handle the playa life? You cannot go for unabated glory like titillating American sports hero Michael Jordan™ surely would?? Your exciting NOFEAR window decal is but a hollow mockery of the grand precepts thereof??? Fubu my man, don't you want to be The Shit? The Bomb?? The Shit Bomb??? Marilyn Manson™ would buy this stereo! Dennis Rodman™ would buy this stereo! These are great Americans, because they DARE to be great. They DARE to go for it. Fuck the Bailey Building & Loan! The path of true greatness ALWAYS runs smack dab thru Mr. Potter! Always has, always will! Someday, somewhere, you'll see an unauthorized Calvin & Hobbes window decal in the back of a Muthafucka 3000™-equipped pickup truck depicting a sinister Calvin urinating on your model of car stereo, and then you'll know that you had the chance to excel — in a very, VERY meaningful way — and you did not rise up to it like a true champion would have. There will be much wailing and gnashing of the teeth on that day, Mister Fubu. Of this i can assure you.

Ah, but don't let it bother you, Foob. Many people in American society are comfortable with coming in second — i mean, hell, just look at the Minnesota Vikings! But, before i go, please allow me to point out the fact that i recently equipped the vehicle belonging to someone who lives not far from your neighborhood with a similar system, and, as i understand it, now, due to the bitchen-ness of his stereo system and the bitchen-ness of his stereo system alone, he is veritably awash in bitches, as the kids say, who are only too eager to blow him til he nut, spit it on his gut, and suck dat shit back up, and all manner of other pimply hyperbole (note: above rap-type lyrics not my own; am unsure if they were legit lyrics i heard used in tongue-in-cheek context or bona fide parody lyrics. Proceed with caution). Further, i can state with some certainty, sir, that these are, in fact, classy bitches. They all have very small pagers, and use lots of Zapf Chancery, oft-times in the aesthetically pleasing "all caps" format. I ask you this one last time, Gentle Foob: Are you willing to be placated with these Tinkertoy™ sub-woofer holdovers from the Pat Boone generation — or are you CHAMPION ENOUGH to BATTER DOWN THE ANAL HYMENS OF SOCIETY with the Thermo-nuclear SONIC schlong that is the MUTHAFUCKA 3000™??? ...quite frankly, i believe my sales commissions would be unprecedented. But again, i digress. In point of fact, i have digressed to the point where i no longer feel like finishing this column, but it is too late in the game to start anew (unless, of course, i wanna see how funny it is when i submit a couple pages of "all work and no play makes Jack a dull lad" this month. Actually, it couldn't be any worse than reading Lefty Hooligan [i heard from a couple people that there was something in the last issue about no longer using this zine as a forum in which to bash MRR; of course, since i DON'T HAVE A COPY, i wouldn't know, but, all the same, i'll keep this month's slag brief: I'd like to point out the fact that, ever since i quit MRR, they have intentionally fucked up the ads i take out {and pay $ for} for my record label every month, crunkling them up and smudging them and wiping girl-cum all over them and making them quite difficult to read. I applaud their maturity and overriding sense of good sportsmanship]). Anyway, my point, at some point, seemed to be pointed in the direction that the strata of humanity that i feel is the most advanced — the Goober-Mensch™, if you will — is Rocking Man, those who are actively engaged in the cultural pursuit of creating and appreciating rockingness. Of course, there is a significant amount of human flotsam drawn to the concept of Rockingness Appreciation; the question of who rocks and who don't is one that lends itself to much proletarian debate, little of it particularly insightful. I, in my copious magnanimity, have figured out and am willing to share what i consider to be the most effective (thus far) theory on how to detach Those Who Rock from Those Who Think They Rock But, Goddammit, I Just Don't Like Them And Think They Suck And Don't Rock. It has, i'll have you know, nothing to do with leopard print, dorky sunglasses, or Jack Daniels. My theory is simply this: Anyone who, more often than not, goes record shopping without a clear idea of what it is they're looking for ROCKS. Or anyone who has exactly half of their muff shaved, i'm always open to new ideas. People who only visit prerecorded musical entertainment emporia when they wish to find specific records are doomed to lead lame and unsatisfying lives, because half the time the record they want isn't there, which is, to them, an unsurmountable obstacle to their Intentions of Rocking. The Rocking Man, however, who enters the Rock Shop with little by way of a specific shopping agenda, other than the all-important goal of SOMEHOW, AGAINST ALL ODDS — armed with little but hunches, instincts, hearsay, street smarts, a keen eye

These are, in fact, classy bitches. They all have very small pagers, and use lots of Zapf Chancery, oft-times in the aesthetically pleasing "all caps" format.

REV.NØRB

and ruthless animal cunning — COMING HOME WITH THE BEST RECORD IN THE WORLD, GODDAMMIT (or as best as can be done under the circumstances), will always, in any final analysis, prove to be the superior creature. So there. (New Paragraph, sort of) The purpose of the preceding 3000-odd words was simply for me to justify what i have decided i want to do with this column (other than, of course, blot it from my memory and run screaming down the street): Since there is, realistically, nothing worth writing about in the world of punk rock (and affiliated musical endeavors) today (and if you don't believe me, bear in mind that — as i understand it [i WOULDN'T KNOW; i don't OWN A COPY of last ish], the reason that original Hitlist co-head-cheese Mel Cheplowitz quit to start his own zine, Shredded Cheese, or whatever the fuck [ain't got one of them, neither], was because he and Dr. Bale had a falling out over what should be on the cover, The Politics of Black Metal story or Jets To Brazil. Look, guys, when people are getting into knock-down-drag-outs over who gets the cover of a punk rock/etc. mag, black metal or Jets To Brazil, the scene is in a fucking SHAMBLES. I mean, it's a sad day in the pit when these two theoretically-ballyhooed punk mags put out their first issues, and both of the covers are TOTALLY out-punked by that month's issue of Spin, the only mag of the three to exhibit some grasp of punk rock graphic design and something vaguely resembling a punk band on the cover [and make no fucking mistake, i think the Offspring blow totally and i loathe Spin] [further, please bear in mind that i did not/do not have one iota of use for Jets To Brazil's ancestor band, Jawbreaker, nor any bands of their ilk, nor any bands influenced by them, so calibrate your gauges accordingly. If it's got more than zero percent emo in it, it sucks totally, except maybe for Fugazi's two good songs and the Rites of Spring album]). I mean, the only thing people seem to have to write about these days is how the excitement level generated by The Scene has decayed to the point where they no longer feel any real attachment to it (and, come to think of it, they don't think they ever did), and how hopelessly jaded they are. It's like wow, no fucking shit, that's really brilliant, may i get you a flannel shirt and have you continue with your highly perceptive tales of angst and despair in raiment more suited to your unique perspective??? I mean, sure, punk rock (et al) is at a (relatively) low ebb right now, but so what? If you're gonna grunge out about it, at least have the common decency to do it at home, preferably with the shades down. Of course, i myself am not without the senseless urge to publicly wax world-weary, but, in the immortal words of the Wiggy Marky Ramone, "What is the point? What is the point???" Ergo, in order to combat said urge, and to make the world safe for Rocking Man, i have decided to devote this column, until further notice, to yammering about the records i picked up and listened to on the Friday night (or Substitute Weekly Rocking Night, in the case of Friday being pre-empted by some sort of sex thing) nearest to this column's date of writing. This, i feel, reduces everything to what i feel is the Demi-Universal Critical Rock Appreciation Act™ — the act of returning from one's local record shoppe with a stack of new goodies, then plunking down in front of one's home stereo with a couple Red Raspberry Diet Rite™s (or equivalent) and a roll of SweeTarts™ to be either blasted apart or disenchanted or puzzled or entirely nauseated by the shit one had felt strongly enough about to purchase that evening. The Universal in the Particular, dude! It's very Art! Unfortunately, due to my peculiar long-windedness in setting up the from-here-on-out aims of this column, i no longer have the space to initiate said discussion of the records i spun last Rocking Night (Rockets/Banana Erectors/Sell Outs/Brides/Loli & the Chones/Spaceshits/Von Zippers) — verily, twould be akin to making fuck in a Geo Metro ! — thus, thou must needs content thyself with a quick overview of the records i played the Rocking Night Before Last (Baseball Furies/Von Zippers/Supersnazz/Rondelles/Pussycats/King Brothers); a particularly uninteresting Rocking Night as the only thing vaguely satisfying in the whole bunch was a Supersnazz b-side — primarily because it was one of those songs that's one chord for like 75% of the song, then the other two chords fill up the remaining quarter, i'm queer for that shit — and, after spinning the whole kit and kaboodle, i was bemoaning the sad fact that the records i had come home with did not get my metaphorical load off (obviously, my literal load was taken care of with the Supersnazz sleeve), until i remembered that i had one record left that i had not played — one of those Rhino "British Invasion" comp CDs, that i hadn't intended on playing during Rocking Night, only at work — that i bought solely because it had "Do The Freddie" by Freddie & The Dreamers on it. So, i'm totally left cold by all this punk vinyl, and, in desperation, i spin this stupid corp'rit comp CD, and "Do The Freddie" comes on and just fucking BLOWS ME AWAY, as does the song right before it, "Making Time" by the Creation (in retrospect, surely where the Gain stole "Louder Than Pop" from). I program these two songs to repeat, and sit in total auditory bang-shang-a-lang-gri-la for like the next two hours. Noting the great irony of what Rocked me and what didn't, i begin to wonder if i am growing old, and am no longer in tune with the cosmic pulsebeat of the hip and groovy. Am i Rocking Man no longer? Need i cash in my mutual funds to procure a Muthafucka 3000™ to bolster my flagging self-image? Do i need to buy a fucking vowel or something??? Ah, but within a week, i hear "Making Time" in a TV commercial for some movie (note: Beating The Rush [insert Geddy Lee joke] & being hip to keen old tune before it is [re] popularized in modern day mass media is very cool) , and Hitlist comes out with Russell Quan's (Russell = arbiter of all things Kookily Hip) column title being something like GEEK AND DESTROY: Freddie & The Dreamers TAKE ON Herman's HermitS IN A BARBED BUBBLEGUM MATCH TO THE DEATH or similar, and i realize that, SOMEHOW, AGAINST ALL ODDS — armed with little but hunches, instincts, hearsay, street smarts, a keen eye and ruthless animal cunning — i have entered a record store and come away with something totally GREAT and COOL. Uh, i think Russell pronounced Freddie & The Dreamers cool. I wouldn't know. NOBODY SENT ME A COPY. ⊕

The State of Underground Rock Music: A Lack of New Ideas / A Lack of Community?



1998? Where music is concerned, glad it's over!!! For two reasons. One, and most importantly: for the first time in my 26 years as an album buyer, I didn't find a single LP that mesmerized and obsessed me. Even the leanest years a decade ago produced monumental and enduring works, such as 1987's *Strangeways Here I Come* (Smiths), 1989's *The Stone Roses*, and 1990's *The La's* and *The House of Love*, as well as a gaggle of U.S. post-punk and emocore masterpieces. This year, there were several fine works, plenty to keep me hanging in as a fan and writer, and enough to keep me digging through the endless stream of publicist-fed blather and the *stacks* of wretched mediocrity/sterility that passes for new hopefuls' CDs. But where was that masterpiece, that perfect blend of vision, forward-thinking, modernity, warm production, tight, inspired playing, smart arrangements, and most of all, tunes, words and singing? Where was the album for those times when the odd friend popped over, or the occasional stranger cornered me in a club and inquired?

In the past there was always something I couldn't wait to recommend, something I hoped everyone in the world would hear....A record every bit as accomplished and ambitious as the greatest LPs of my pre-teen years, *Revolver*, *The Who Sell Out*, *Pet Sounds*, etc. This past whole year there were only "great" records, no *phenomenal* ones. No bona fide "10s." There were worthy, yeoman efforts, but none that just seemed to come out of nowhere, or seemed to be put together with magical elements captured in a studio as if by metaphysics or the hand of guiding ghosts. There were none so supremely distinct and *now* that you knew you'd still love them and listen to them in 30 years time; none that you'd like to play for your grandchildren some day if you ever chance to have any.

Hell, even in 1997, a relatively weak year, there were *three* such LPs. All three remain in my CD player to stun and amaze me a good 20 months later: Radiohead's awesome, possibly perfect *O.K. Computer;* Catherine Wheel's supremely moody, spark-ridden *Adam and Eve;* and Gene's unbelievably moving, post-Smiths masterwork *Drawn to the Deep End.* Long after I eventually put 1998's best LPs aside, these three (and For Against's *Shelf Life*) are still coming out of my speakers, proof of a thoroughly modern rock that doesn't sound like I've heard it all before, so many times, in epochal echoes of my ever-growing record and CD collection.

Secondly, and most troubling, the best LPs of 1998 were almost entirely made by veteran bands that (mostly) stuck close to a sound and style they'd long ago established. Though that's not so bad, it does not bode well for the immediate future. Today's veterans are tomorrow's split-ups. (Even such bedrock institutions as Siouxsie and the Banshees, Cocteau Twins, and Jesus & Mary Chain called it a day the last few years, all following the release of their best LPs in years!) If nothing comes along to replace them, it's like a championship team that grows old without simultaneously breaking in young talent: the stars retire and recede, the dynasty ends, the team plummets towards the misery of last place. See the (hockey) Rangers' 1997-1998 and 1998-1999.

The places I have traditionally looked for the best new talent, the United Kingdom clubs and halls, and American/Canadian/Aussie/New Zealand indie labels, have largely failed me. First let me discuss England/Scotland/Wales/Ireland, and then I will tackle the other places,especially here (if British music holds no interest for you, skip the next ten paragraphs and cut to the discussion of the U.S. underground):

BRITAIN:

Although Britain produced all three of 1997's masterworks, the trio were all authored by bands who'd originally made a mark before the rise oft he crippling, stifling "Britpop" movement circa 1995. (Nostalgia is fun for a while but usually self-defeating in the long run.) All three carried on valiantly, splendidly ignoring that ephemeral, nostalgic trend. The best British LPs this past year also ignored Britpop's thankfully waning, commercially bankrupt influence (including the new one by the fascinating Spiritualized). All but one came from bands that formed and prospered before that horrendous post-Suede/Oasis divide. All had an ethic well in place that didn't build entirely on some jingoist writer fantasy clothed in the silly Union Jack, as

Harrison, Starr, McCartney, Davies and the late Lennon and Steve Marriott looked down and frowned. Good thing some people aren't swayed entirely by the latest hyped fashion!

To wit, Swervedriver produced another smart, sharp, jagged volcano eruption in *99th Dream*. The band still melds a barbarian '90s guitar edge, psychedelic dreampop euphoria, melodic '60s hooks reminiscent of the Who (who they've covered twice on record), and a Stooges-inspired whack 'n'thud. But this baaaad bunch are now the "last gang in town" from the incredible 1990-1992 U.K. "shoegaze" scene that they were really only on the periphery of. So their fourth LP may still serve up a superb wall of salacious sound through clenched teeth, but like a leader whose troops have been slain, they fight on without much support save for their committed fans. Lord knows the tin-eared press and radio over here barely noted their existence, even though they spent almost the entire year on our shores touring the LP.

Likewise, Mojave 3's *Out of Tune* was brilliant, but it's only English feature was that it was made by people who live there. All of the LP's loving sounds and influence are American, derived from Hank Williams Sr., George Jones, Patsy Cline, Gram Parsons, the Byrds, Gene Clark, Brian Wilson, Bob Dylan (most of all), the Band, Uncle Tupelo and their off shoots, The Scud Mountain Boys, and the new Mercury Rev. And like Swervedriver, Mojave are partially a holdover from the amazing dreampop scene of the early part of this decade — oh how that period was awash in different inspired movements! — from their original incarnation as Slowdive.

For the first time in my 26 years as an album buyer, I didn't find a single LP that mesmerized and obsessed me.

And while Belle and Sebastian are at least a welcome cause for comfort, not only because they're fantastic-what a shock to find out they're also extraordinary live, the exact opposite of what I expected given their rigid shyness and lack of gig experience — but also because they are the first post-Britpop band to achieve greatness *and* success simultaneously. *Finally*, a critics band that deserves every column inch they garner, not only for great music and absolutely superb lyrics (some of the best since Morrissey's pen began to leak), but also for tunes the rest of the recording world would love to write and record. The B&S railroad is full of actually-felt emotions, sentiment, joy, solitude, and surrender. Bless them.

But even here I remain at least a tad unfulfilled. Singer/leader Stuart Murdoch's happy-go-lucky refusal to speak to the press seems cute from a distance, like a brave stand for art elevated over the endless yack yack yack of modern media megalomania (and music over exposed breasts, something not even so-called "Rock" magazines like *Rolling Stone* and *Spin* can manage anymore). But I find this stance an unmitigated disappointment. Not only professionally, as there is so much I would like to ask him, but in general, because from his lyrics and his between-song quips he's proven to be a rare figure in rock with a totally advanced sense of humor and *a lot to say*. True, there were a spate of interviews by other band members, and I read them hungrily. But just as talking to East Bay Ray or Klaus Fluoride in the Dead Kennedys in 1981 would have been unsatisfying if the young Jello Biafra had refused to speak, one can't help but think we're missing out on something far more rare and interesting.

Beyond that, as evidenced by their otherwise splendid *The Boy With the Arab Strap,* so far B&S's musical output has been great but not *entirely* new sounding. Much as I love them, the strains of Nick Drake, Smiths, Felt, Go-Betweens, Orange Juice, and the whole of the now defunct and shockingly collectible Sarah label — the Field Mice in particular — means that others find Murdoch and Co. a fresher trip than I. They too sound positively vintage to my ears.

So before I turn my attention to American indies and elsewhere, who else in Britain caught my attention? A few more old friends from the early'90s, namely The Boo Radleys' *Kingsize*. However, the Boos' fine back-to-basics return will mostly go unheard here, since they lost their second major deal and never went anywhere with all that major muscle anyway. To top it off, the LP stiffed in Britain despite the luxury of favorable reviews, and the band broke up at the end of January after 10 years. Ouch.

Then there's the incredible Frankie Stubbs of Leatherface, whose gut-wrenching punk rock LP with his newer band Jesse was overshadowed by Leatherface's reformation, and was at least slightly marred by a muddy mix. And since the general American public doesn't know Frankie Stubbs from Levi Stubbs, he could have made another LP as full-out stunning and monumental as Leatherface's 1992 killer *Mush* or 1995 farewell *The Last* (the two best punk rock LPs produced this decade that were not recorded by Bad Religion), and no one would have noticed here anyway. What a shame. While doggerel like Hootie and the Spice Girl Blow-mes sells in the tens of millions...

Two other Brits that go back even further, to the last decade, also made wonderfully realized LPs. But no one listened to nor cared about New Model Army's gripping *Strange Brotherhood* or Guy Chadwick's *Lazy, Soft and Slow* either, even though, unlike Stubbs, they were well

known in college rock/radio circles at one time. New Model Army's main market is now Germany, where, like Bad Religion, they are stars. Cripes, here's a band from Bradford whose seventh LP in 17 years is not released here (their last one appeared here on Epic, and they'd had two other LPs on Capitol) or in their native England (double yikes!), yet they record for EMI in Berlin. What a waste. And the wonderful House of Love still retain a legion of fans sorry over their split, but no U.S. label bent over to pick up Chadwick's modest, pretty solo debut, either. I barely even met anyone who'd bought the import, since — let's face it — $27 is pretty damn daunting. (In 1980, I used to buy my import LPs for $9, only $3 more than domestic releases).

So much for the old-timers. The only Brit *newcomer* to make a dent in my headphones was Embrace — no relation to the Ian MacKaye-led, ferocious post-Minor Threat/pre-Fugazi Dischord band. The '90s Embrace's LP was *too ambitious*, married to so much melodrama that it was near-impossible to swallow at one hour-long sitting. Too bad, too, for this trait hid a wealth of strong material, of which "All You Good, Good People" was one of the singles of the year. Not surprisingly, the LP sunk without a trace here despite going to #1 in starved England. One wonders if the band will one day rein in the bombast. For now I was hesitant to tell anyone to buy it unheard even though I enjoyed it.

THE UNITED STATES/ CANADA

OK, fine the Brit scene is dead, hopefully only temporarily. There's always the U.S., right? In the last few years America has produced the best music overall, anyway. But things are starting to slip over here, too.The majors have now largely run out of third-rate Alterna bands to pluck from the indie rosters, yet nothing much has come up in the small label ranks. Little has replaced all the talent that was drained out, sifted, spit-out and abandoned, from Jawbox to Firehose, both sad casualties (or, having had a look 'round, jumped the foundering ship like All). Groups suchas Royal Trux and the Muffs now advance the dubious claim that it's some sort of victory to be back on an indie label, when they're lucky to even still have a viable home. Yeah, right.

In short, indies seem like they don't know what to do. The grunge/alterna takeoff gave them a shot of cash for a while, and even some surprising, short-lived credibility. But now all the cash-cows have left the idyllic grazing pen. Not surprisingly, the indies that are left flourishing are largely major label-funded on their biggest projects, suchas Matador, Mammoth, and Sub Pop. At least, however, these labels still A&R themselves, showing eclectic taste: they all seem to give their bands a fair crack at making the LPs the artists want to make, for better or worse.(As good as he is, Robert Pollard of Guided By Voices can still use the editor a major label would want to give him, as his *Waved Out* and brand new 1999 LP *Kid Marine* showed yet again. But I wouldn't want other favorites such as Eric Matthews, Jeremy Enigk, or Joe Pernice to have to take much guff from any label exec who didn't understand the artist's desires.) Yet something is missing out there in indie land, the one refuge one always had from the banal trends that come and go in the more commercial marketplace, from the inane "hair bands" of yesteryear to the fun but silly swing revival that's here today, truly gone tomorrow.Perhaps it's not all the fault of the indies themselves. As a winking, wry judge told me (a juror) when I'd asked after the verdict why the defense hadn't called any witnesses to corroborate its view of the case, "You can't invent witnesses out of thin air." Likewise, a label can't wave Disney wands (or Disney wads) and invent bands out of thin air. True, independent labels have a mandate to investigate and document what is happening out there, for fun, art and profit. But it's not their job to come up with the sounds and songs in the first place. America is truly stretching for something, just as Britain is. We can't find it so far.

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And what *is* that something? No one seems to know, let alone I. All I hear is the well-worn phrase "the past is present." Just as Brit-pop tried to warm over the Beatles, Kinks, Small Faces and call it national pride, Americans are now into recycling to the detriment of any real exploration — at least where it comes to rock 'n' roll. Grunge itself was little but a metal come-on with a punk look and attitude, so no wonder *that* was a dead end, and no I don't miss Soundgarden. But Radiohead went platinum last year, so where are the young bands inspired to rethink their presentation?

In fact, the only band to get the hint so far seems to be old, long-thought-dead R.E.M., whose *Up* restores the more artful whimsy they'd had from 1980-1992 and then lost. With an LP of artistic impulses, with ambiance as paramount as songs, a seemingly-sliding band slipped out of its 18-year uniform of bass/guitar/drums. Like *Automatic For the People*, only more esoteric, *Up* excels thanks to its overall mood. The sounds are unpredictable yet well-mixed so as to hypnotize, sucking one in to keyboard and piano-dominated tapestries/auras. Surely this was the surprise Top 10 album of the year, and as with Belle & Sebastian, it was good to see all the enthusiastic press if not the deserved sales jump.

But again, where are the garage/club bands, who should be mining the new frontier Radiohead's challenge threw down? When My Bloody Valentine sounded the call in 1988, hundreds rushed in, on both sides of the pond,fools, fanatics, freaks, and fetishizers. Now, it seems that despite *OK Computer* and to a lesser extent *Adam and Eve*, everyone remains asleep, unchallenged by all the new possibilities!

So the hither and thither fan is left to check out every little red herring, every little momentary asteroid that announces itself in the cosmos in the hope that it's the big bang, with little to recommend.Without invoking a tirade I wrote last year against Electronica (from which I got some intelligent disagreement, but very little, and much more surprising agreement), I remain convinced that the best Electronica records will not remain loved in 5-10 years. Likewise, we're all having as much fun pretending to be our pre-'50s parents out for a sock-hop jitterbug to Brian Setzer and his younger pretenders, but their fun swing scene can't hold a candle to Duke Ellington, Glenn Miller, Cab Calloway, or even Benny Goodman and Stan Kenton — just as we wanted to be our '50s uncles and aunts stepping out to the hep-cat rockabilly beat when Setzer thought a pompadour was a better nostalgia trip in the Stray Cats. Speaking of which, Setzer's post-Bloodless Pharoes rise amidst the early '80s rockabilly craze (I used to favor Levi & the Rockats) just made me mourn Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran, and Elvis's deaths all the more, and made me thrill to hot Carl Perkins gigs. Now the current swing scene just makes me wish I wasn't so young when the great Louis Armstrong died. This new stuff just doesn't cut it.

And as less obvious nostalgia goes I kind of like what Rufus Wainwright is up to. A consummate, somehow mature tunesmith, the son of Loudon III never strays from pre-punk '70s, singer/songwriter song and dancehall, with pocket string orchestras (and some quiet brass), sublime piano, beguiling, unobtrusive guitar, and his curious voice (like Gordon Gano of Violent Femmes). His debut brings back what was good in the post-Beatles, pre-Pistols years, by someone who can truly claim to be a child of that era! If we're going to have a revival of a dated era, he's a genuine talent, 1000 times greater than Setzer or the Blasters or even '80s punk-country bands ever were. And his whole genre is so much less staid and tapped out. However, I pause to consider what could happen if a whole "troubadour nation" sprouted up in the hands of lesser ability!

In the same sense, I'm overjoyed by Joe Pernice and Tom Monahan's LP as the Pernice Brothers. Despite lyrical disquiet, the puzzling Pernice is in love with undeniably *up*, contrarily catchy, harmonically developed pop, the kind the later-'60s fed us regularly. The ex-Scud Mountain Boys' singer pens subtle, graceful, challenging, and hopeful-sounding songs undercut by words of vulnerable distaste and frustration that actually match his fantastic heroes, the ('67-'72) Bee Gees, Zombies, Beach Boys and Chris Bell. This is what that surprisingly awful Costello/Bacharach collaboration *should* have sounded like!!!!

But again, as good as this LP is, and it is one of the great surprises of the year (who could expect a former Alterna-country figure to be so much, much, much more accomplished as a pop purveyor?), it again feels backwards looking. If Colin Blunstone of the Zombies would only use Joe's backing band instead of recording horrific versions of Billy Bragg's songs, it would be the Zombies reborn!

And even those with a thoroughly modern sound/feel failed to update past bodies of work. Instead, such stalwart favorites as Bad Religion and Bob Mould retrenched, dipping into the whole of their past to produce exciting, rip-roaring, thundering works that took stock of 18 years of recording and playing. No, no new ground, and no real advancement. Which is why neither feels as much a colossal achievement as 1997's trio of greats, or Irish group Whipping Boy's last LP, *Heartworm* (one of the truly overlooked LPs of this decade; here's another band that sadly called it a day in January 1999!). But if we can't have that, the Bad Religion and Mould LPs were remarkable nonetheless in their solid, gigantic punch in a year that lacked guts and fire.

In Bad Religion's case, it added up to the album of the year for 1998. Talk about a return to form. Proving they can prosper without the departed Brett Gurewitz, No Substance restores their trademark powercrunch, correcting Ric Ocasek's misproduction of 1996's *The Gray Race*. It blasts from fiery start to hairy end. Explosive, totally melodic, and highly thoughtful, this 10th LP transcends the modern punk they helped found, by bands that couldn't even carry their guitar straps.

And lyrically, Greg Graffin's sneering is backed up by an intellectual thoughtfulness that adds the depth missing in the vast, disheartening whole of second-rate '90s punk. Who else would write a livid song about the inventor of the hydrogen bomb? (Edward Teller in "The Biggest Killer in American History." Teller was equally savaged in Carl Sagan's fascinating *The Demon Haunted World*) Who else would recoil in horror at the approaching millennium, not because of Y2K or some pagans superstition, but from plain-spoken fear of a world

where the destructive corporate will becomes all-important at the expense of the very earth itself, let alone its people, animals, and other organisms. Who wants a world sanitized for our protection by Wal-mart and Disney. Rupert Murdoch for president!

Not that Mould's LP was far behind. In a period where everyone seems to be either going folk, '60s retro, wispy confessional, or orchestral rock, it's almost *shocking* to hear this glorious,unapologetic, ker-pow assault. It reminds a little of both Sugar and occasionally Hüsker Dü, tempered by some moody stuff and one amusing trip-hop excursion that would only make Tricky laugh. For the 15th time on a (studio) LP, Mould can't help but interject pathos, hungry desire, and desperation in every mood he touches. Wow!

But much as I admire the vets — and how nice of Mark Eitzel to make his best, most tantalizingly tortured solo LP to date, totally and deservedly winning back a lot of his more hesitant ex-American Music Club fans — I'm still hunting for something I haven't heard. I heard a lot of earnest, emo, post-punk, by-the-numbers garage rock, esoterica, basic power-pop, new wave pop, and even a little psychedelia here and there, but so few seemed to strike a distinct aura to take one away from the average chord changes, the pedestrian lyric, the been-there-done-that-so-many-times feeling of most indie rock. It's all made by people who just don't "rock"enough, who lack either the tunes, the talent, or the moxie to stand out from such a huge pack. (Elliott Smith did, again, but with his industry exposure, he no longer seems very new. Never mind that, though, *XO* was a wonderful folk-pop LP and may he record a dozen more! And Mercury Rev did so with a stunning orchestral-emotional LP that everyone else loved more than me because I don't care for the singer, sadly.) And those that did manage to find their own niche, still paid the price in obscurity, even to those who follow the indie scene.

For instance, most people think that Idaho split up after parting ways with Caroline Records after their sparkling *Three Sheets to the Wind*. So not only do older fans remain unaware of the band's continued output, but I didn't see their new LP in any of the stores I frequent. The warm, brooding, gentle grace of *Alas* might as well not exist, a figment of my imagination. And Australia's electrifying Glide couldn't get their dense, pounding, yet unbelievably catchy *Open Up and Croon* released here four years ago, so it's no surprise that even with a limited U.S. pressing of their not-as-good but still damn, damn great follow-up, *Disappear Here*, they too found exactly zero audience.

Which leads to the main point: Where, exactly are the fans? Just ten years ago, it seemed everyone one met at a gig was well versed in the overseas bands in other English-speaking lands as well as the local product. People collected the Flying Nun label and lived and died on Chills releases. Others scarped up one stompin' Australian LP after another. Nowadays, even the prolific Sydney group You Am I couldn't get a buzz for their gleeful, crankin' '60s-mod/R&B-meets-Replacements *Hourly Daily* despite having it come out on Warners in 1997 and playing lots of U.S. gigs. So no wonder Glide can't get the slightest look-see. Likewise, a Chills-like wonder appeared last year in the form of the Mutton Birds' scrumptious *Envy of Angels* — on Australian major Virgin/EMI at that — yet I found exactly one person in this whole country who'd ever heard of the damn band, and he's the one who bought the LP for me!

So where are we? It's one thing to get some good LPs to listen to,but quite another to feel no camaraderie with other fans. At the risk of repetition, I say again that I never have any difficulty finding 50 LPs to make my best-of list each year, without resorting to archival/reissue recordings. (I had plenty of those too, as ever! The Kinks '60s LPs! Zombies box! Pretty Things landmark concept LP! Otis Redding and Bessie Smith! Treasures all!). But it feels so much more lonely nowadays. Before Nirvana, there was indeed a scene. That band's assent was merely the final product, the culmination, to something that had been going on here for 15 years. But in the wake of *Nevermind* and *Dookie*, there is no "scene" any more, just a bunch of fragmented people searching in the dark for common ground.

Occasionally the scattered faithful seem to meet at one band's show or other, be it by Belle and Sebastian, Elliott Smith, Sleater-Kinney, or Sunny Day Real Estate. But even then, it all feels too held-together by scotch tape and scissors, ready to fly apart at the first idiotic, inane flame war on the poor artist's "newsgroup" or internet list. In this time when information is now so much more readily available to the average fan, we all seem less and less bonded together to share our discoveries...less inclined to feel part of something that we can put our finger on...less inclined to want to shout from the highest rooftops (let alone a chat room or list) how much we love a record or band we've just discovered. Instead we all seem in retreat. Not to electronica, or some other fad that will always come and go, touted as the "future" and the "eradication" of rock as we've known it. But to any sense of commonalty other than the purchase of the same concert ticket. We all seem so entrenched in marginal, walled-off musical communities that no one mingles any more.

Now it is true that I am 36 now, and 36-year-olds are prone to such hand-wringing. But I remember writing a similar lament at 26, one I was the happiest to see wiped out by new explosions of new sounds and new scenes. I exalted at excited people passing tapes and

LPs/CDs around. I wonder if there is another movement, another outbreak of unmitigated inspiration going in so many different directions, yet held together somehow in the minds of like-minded fans. Just as you could insist that Fugazi and Ride were part of the same great tapestry of insurrection. An explosion can't be exciting unless everyone is out there jumping in on it while something is happening, as it was last decade with college radio, fanzines, managers, indie labels/distributors, and those not too anglophobic or xenophobic to also embrace the foreign talent. All I know is, if another big bang comes again, I want to be part of it, to once again do more than merely consume it again. To feel the power of shared experience when it's real and it means something larger than just a gig, just a record. And I want to make sure my magazine helps cover it.

Mere gigs and LPs can always get me by and keep me wanting to publish. But until more LPs appear that do more than check out what's gone before and also point the way towards a hot future, and until we all get back to the days of being more than cheerleaders for major label farm teams, there is no game, just the sidelines for all of us to sit on. Let it be soon. 1999 and the next decade has to be better! If not, perhaps I too will dread the millennium, when Nike and Seagrams and Barnes and Noble dotcom help Disney-fy the last bastions of unfettered creativity and expression.

A SECOND THOUGHT: THE STATE OF THE LARGER MUSIC SCENE:

I admit I didn't follow the mainstream as much this year as in previous years. But I mean, what was to follow? The critics went mad about a bunch of shrill nabobs and posturing Pollyannas and prurients, same as they do every year, but there seemed to be precious little to offset it. Even R.E.M.'s return to form failed to make the Top 20 bin I saw at Sam Goody (whose Nick Drake bin was empty, as was Borders — I had to find my girlfriend's birthday present elsewhere. What happened to back-stock in this country? Gone to the internet, hasn't it?). Well, we get the charts and critical faves we deserve. The music mags are now as bad as all the other entertainment/lifestyle/glamour/celebrity mags they think they're better than, with all the sex and flesh they reserve for the cover. I can't tell them apart from *Cosmo*. How soon 'til *Rolling Stone* gives me their ten top tips on what my girlfriend secretly wants? Even *Alternative Press* is thoughtfully providing me with dude-like fashion spreads...

(And as much as I think Craig Marks is a good man and am horrified he was attacked — one of music journalism's low points of the year for sure, and just another reason to loathe all-shock, nil substance Marilyn Manson — I was interested that *Spin* supposedly pulled Manson from the cover because of a slight dip in sales of Manson's new LP. If true, that speaks more volumes about *Spin's* commitment to the artists it covers. Perhaps it isn't as bad as the build-'em-up-and-bury-'em bastardization of theself-eating U.K. press I now shun, but it's still ridiculous. OK *Spin*, go back to putting Natalie Imbruglia on the cover, just to show what a bunch of rockers you really are.)

Speaking of "flesh," as in her lyric "pound of flesh," man, am I bored with Hole stories! Courtney is now defending her plastic surgery as a wise and hip career move, eh? We can't take her seriously unless she's attractive, eh? Why do journalists print this doggy-do without laughing in her reconstructed face? The only lucid moments on her whole new CD are all about herself and her "plight" as a boo-hoo media whore. Oh, the sufferings of the poor over-exposed. It's all about her. Otherwise, the woman has nothing to say, or so it seems. Maybe she should go back to acting, where that sort of self-absorption is some sort of blessing to society.

Actually, I don't mind her as much as I mind her crit lackeys who lap up her every fart as some kind of divine wisdom, of someone who has lived the real life the rest of us could never endure. For damn sake, the woman is no Bessie Smith, nor is she the woman's issues agitator Helen Keller, nor even Janis Joplin, who, last I checked, was far from a fashion model in the looks department. Love's just someone who makes average rock 'n' roll with a tired attitude that just serves to make old Kurt look more of a genuine icon than we'd even thought. Tell me I'm not the only one who's tired of the protracted, breathless Courtney media whirl. Next!

The Offspring? A funny song, sure. But I thought they were supposed to be more than a novelty band. When I saw them live they were. So I'm curious why they'd go that route. Oh well, I'll take the laughs anyway.

Beck? Some nice folk, but what a bad attempt at bossanova! Leave it to Jobim and the two Gilbertos!

Beastie Boys? I thought I graduated from high school long ago. Though the newfound, off-stage political consciousness makes it impossible to hate them anymore, from their anti-bombing speech at that award show to their participation in the anti-death penalty concert with Rage Against the Machine, Bad Religion, Black Star, Chuck D., and members of Chumbawumba.

OK, never mind the oxymoronic (yes, I meant to say moronic) "Commercial Alternative," we're left with...a bunch of shrieking female singers. Who was it who said a few years ago that it's a good thing that women have finally taken over the market after all those decades of (justifiable) bitching, so that they too could make as godawful dreck as men?

Last week a close friend reminded me of how little I liked Alanis's hit LP three years ago. Now, I told her, I don't mind her so much. Not because Alanis's gotten any better, far from it. That new single is almost as much of a glass-breaker on that repeated high-note as the awful pelican-screams that woman in the Cranberries let loose in "Zombie." No, Alanis just looks

better because of the seemingly ceaseless parade of far worse, even more shallow imitators, from Jewel to Meredith Brooks. My good friend Michael Ackerman summed up the current situation well when he wrote in *The Big Takeover*, "We now have a bunch of new music stars who are all dross and no substance. There are still spinners out there who would try to palm off Alanis Morissette as the real thing, even when a brand-new P.J. Harvey album is on the way. All the time, I hear record business people evaluate new artists by asking themselves and others, 'How do I sell this?' As long as it's marketable, who needs talent? Looking cool obviates the need to have something to say. You don't really need to be a rebel if you look like one."

To that I add that Jewel, Brooks, Bonham, and Paula Cole and all the other flotsam from the deluge of husky-voiced babies without their rattles have succeeded in making Alanis *feel* like P.J. Harvey in comparison.

And then there's the bad-pop Top 40, as routinely pablum-laced as ever. I bought the Backstreet Boys CD for my 13-year-old niece this holiday. Last year I got her the Hanson Brothers, no I mean Hansen (maybe I should have bought her the *Slapshot* movie). I could have bought any number of even worse groups. Does it matter? None of these Joe's will ever supplant yesteryear's Top 40 staples such as Aretha Franklin, Otis Redding, Soloman Burke, or Wilson Pickett, or even good old Mary Wells from the playlists of the oldies stations in 20 years time. They just plain *suck*. Ditto Mariah Carey. Or Celine Dion, whose *Titanic* blockbuster was just this year's horrendous "I Will Always Love You," the song I wanted most to escape all year in one coffee bar after another, but couldn't. Excruciating!

It's getting so I'm nostalgic for stuff I didn't even like as a kid, like Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes, the Ohio Players, or the Spinners. At least that stuff had a whiff of groove and musical style. For chrissakes, the contemptible Four Seasons had more going for them than the losers on the radio nowadays. People like Brandy make me head for Sinatra, let alone the early Bad Brains. And who can take Garth Brooks or Ms. Twain seriously after having heard 1964 George Jones? Lauryn Hill? Overrated, and boring. Pearl Jam? Blowhard sludge rock, even if Eddie's not evil and I kinda like him. Page and Plant's tour never looked so appealing. Rage Against the Machine? Cog in the Machine. (Ackerman again.) Though the guitarist has a brain (a Harvard grad at that). They shouldn't really be surprised that their fans had no interest in the "Free Mumia" gig I just mentioned — they just wanted to rock, maaaaan. You get the audience you deserve.

I remain at a loss to understand how the masses of America can plunk down $18 plus tax (itself outrageous, for CDs that cost less than $1 to press) for these minimal experiences. But then again, I remain at a loss to understand a country where some dickhead pays nearly $3 million for a frickin' souvenir baseball (not even a piece of art) — I'd rather see $3 million of some idiot rich fucker's money go to the Sisters of Charity to teach inner city kids (the Newark chapter can't even buy more than three "Baby Think It Over" dolls to demonstrate to their seniors how much of a pain in the ass raising a baby by themselves will be if they get pregnant) or cancer research, anything other than just one stupid baseball! What we do with our enormous wealth is appalling. Just ask anyone in Haiti.

Or, for that matter, I fail to comprehend a country that dares impeach a president for covering up an affair when every other politician, athlete or business tycoon has done the same throughout history. This, in a country that has boobs on the front of every magazine — even on the cover of the magazine that's examining our obsession with them, Details! — and has sexual references in every joke on the Hollywood Squares, and eyeballs sex scenes or innuendos in every movie trailer around, no less. Sometimes I think music and musicians' worlds are the only ones where sex is a given, not a puritanical controversy disguised as a threat to our very fabric. It's not good or bad, it's just honest. Clinton is a pig, and if I was a woman I would slap him upside the head, to borrow a Dave Winfield phrase. But one of the funniest things about this whole crap is that I have to defend him, when, as a president, he's always trying to gut our civil rights. Maybe he's getting what he deserves in a roundabout way. He has no respect for *our* privacy, I guess he got bit in the ass on that one!

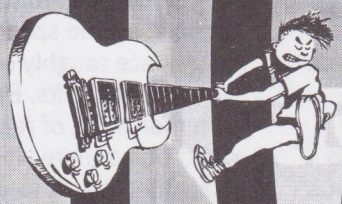
The only thing that was missing was Judge Judy to preside over the "trial." I bet she'd have made quicker work of it and awarded the American people $500 and a ham sandwich for putting up with this whole mockery of a sham of a charade. How soon to bore Gore and Tipper of PMRC lore? Tell me when it's over!

And with the show-trial curiosity now over, the end of a whole 'nother round of sound and solemn fury signifying nothing but talk show blah blah, here we are already in another year of marketing over music in 1999. Every year the industry gets better at packaging and marketing a look and a pose, and less even remotely interested in the work of nurturing and developing something we will look back at in 50 years with something other than contempt or ironic smugness. We get all the one-hit wonders and plastic disposa-stars until we tire of them and start on the next set, just as we forget how much McDonalds' food made us ill the last time we ate it. Anyone for the next Paula Abdul?

Adieu,

Jack Rabid

cinder block 10th anniversary





a major success with diy ethics

INTERVIEW BY JEFF BALE AND BRETT MATHEWS

photos by kate powers and m.c shumaker

On February 20th, 1999 Cinder Block celebrated ten years of existence by throwing a party. Cinder Block, a t-shirt production facility run by Jeffery and Cinder of Tilt, has been servicing many touring punk bands' needs for shirts and merchandise. The party was sort of Cinder Block's way of thanking their employees, friends, and customers for making it all possible. They rented out the huge hall next door to where Cinder Block is located, and filled it with video games, pinball machines (coincidentally, I succeeded in winning my first ever free replay on the "Terminator" pinball machine, even if it was on a night when all the games were free!), putting greens, dunk tanks, and other sorts of party enhancers. The food was great, and the beer was plentiful. The planned musical entertainment for the night included One Man Army (a great SF-based '77-style punk band) and Huevos Rancheros (an instrumental band from Canada), but this plan was altered somewhat when Green Day decided to pull



HERE'S TO GOOD FRIENDS, TONIGHT IS KINDA SPECIAL: Cinder and Skinny Erin (Fat Mike's thinner half) take time out from the shindig to smile for the camera



TV EYE: Cinder captures the festivities of the 10th Anniversary party for future generations of aspiring punk businessfolk

their collective selves away from the keg and take the stage with One Man Army's equipment. It was classic. They attempted to play all their old East Bay faves, but about halfway through each song they had trouble remembering the notes and decided it would be more fun to stop and make fun of all the drunks. The highlight of their set was when they started to play the overhyped "Geek Stink Breath", but then decided—about four notes into the song—to cover Ozzy's "Crazy Train". What a beautifull sight.

Huevos Rancheros also found an unexpected visitor on stage during their set. Jello Biafra decided to get up and do "Surfin' Bird" and "I Fought The Law" with them.

It was definitely a night that will not soon be forgotten, since so many local punk icons and legends appeared in such rare form. Jeffery and Cinder were kind enough to step away from the festivities for a little while and talk to Jeff Bale and myself. Fortunately, neither Jeff nor I was too wasted yet, and things proceeded in a relatively coherent fashion.

—*Brett Mathews*

BRETT: FIRST OF ALL, I WANT TO TOUCH ON THE FIRST FEW YEARS OF CINDER BLOCK. I'M NOT SURE EXACTLY ON WHICH LEVEL YOU GUYS STARTED. DID YOU START DOING BAND T-SHIRTS, OR...

Jeffery: Well, I'll just give you a brief...
Cinder: Uh, oh...don't blow my image here!
Jeffery: When I met Cinder, actually, she was selling shirts on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley and at White Plaza in Stanford, on behalf of a guy who made these tourist shirts and these chemistry shirts that said "Caffeine" on them. She was out there selling for this guy, and then he used to pick on her and yell at her sometimes, and one time after he yelled at her, she came home really bummed, and that's when we just said—that point was the defining moment—we just said "fuck that"! We'll just start making our own shirts. I was working as a pastry chef at the time. We lived in a huge warehouse in West Oakland called Phoenix Ironworks. We were also in a punk acoustic band of the same name. The warehouse was pretty notorious at the time. It was in a part of Oakland where you could get away with living in a commercial space that wasn't zoned for residential purposes. It was filled with artists, punks and other malcontents. The building was very large with 50-foot ceilings, the ironworks had long since receded to one little corner of the available space. So we had a floor space roughly equivalent to two square city blocks. Everyone built their own rooms out of recycled lumber and whatnot, so there was no consistency in architecture. It looked like the movie set of "Peter Pan" where the lost boys lived, only done in the style of German Expressionism. The place had a lot of character. There were entire rooms where the walls consisted of junked pianos, mannequins hanging from the ceiling, murals painted by serious graffiti artists, a half pipe called the Widowmaker next door. Dogs and cats were running around the place. With more than 20 people living there at any one given time, it was hard to keep track of who your roommates were. There were 4 major parties a year attended by every smarmy hipster who crawled out of the nooks and crannies of the Bay Area underground. At one Easter party Survival Research Laboratories brought over a lightning machine that they set up on the street in front of the warehouse. It was a gigantic Tesla coil which shot 30-foot arms of lightning straight up into the air. The place was a hotbed of creativity. Both Tilt and the Cinder Block T-shirt company were conceived in the midst of all this chaos. There were a

The t-shirt shop was right above our practice room. It was a 16'x16' space with no roof and no stairs. It was fun trying to lug equipment and supplies up a ladder. And when we started, it was pretty much on no money.
— Jeffery, on the early days of Cinder Block

couple of businesses there already. The t-shirt shop was right above our practice room. It was a 16'x16' space with no roof and no stairs. It was fun trying to lug equipment and supplies up a ladder. And when we started, it was pretty much on no money.
Cinder: A bad check! We got an order for shirts, we wrote a bad check to buy supplies, then we made the shirts, then got paid for the order, and then we ran with the money to the bank to cover the check.
Jeffery: That's not far from the truth, actually. The press we got was from a friend of ours. He allowed us to make three payments of $200 a month for three months, and we got shirts from Costco and made tourist shirts, you know, things like "I Love Berkeley", and sold them on Telegraph Avenue. That was the first year of Cinder Block. Also, while watching people around us on Telegraph Avenue, we saw that some of these tie-dye moguls were making five times as much money as we were...
Cinder: Oh, boy. This is the part that's going to blow our image.
Jeffery: They were making five times as much per day as we were, and so, I'm looking around, I'm out there, and this is three months later, I'm thinking that this is a no-brainer. This is Berkeley, and I've got to start making tie-dyed shirts to sell to these dopey tourists.
Jeffery: So we started making tie-dyes, and we're putting "Berkeley" on them and stuff like that.

JEFF BALE: ALL THOSE "HIPPIE" THINGS THAT A TOURIST WOULD ASSOCIATE WITH THE IMAGE OF BERKELEY.

Jeffery: Right, exactly.
Cinder: Tie-dyes are always gonna sell on Telegraph, they're just a standard tourist product. We did what we had to do in the beginning to survive. For instance when the earthquake happened, nobody was buying anything. Rent was due, and we thought we were going to bite it. We had to act quickly to make an earthquake theme shirt, because nobody was thinking anything but earthquake. So we stayed as long as they would let us at Kinkos, making a photo montage of all the front pages of the local newspapers, and made a T-shirt with images on the front and back. We actually sold thirty shirts at $10 a pop the day after the quake. That 300 bucks saved our ass, at a time when everyone else was biting the dust. Then we finally got to the point where we could hire somebody on the Avenue and somebody in the shop to start helping us.

BRETT: WERE YOU ALREADY DOING BAND SHIRTS AT THAT POINT?

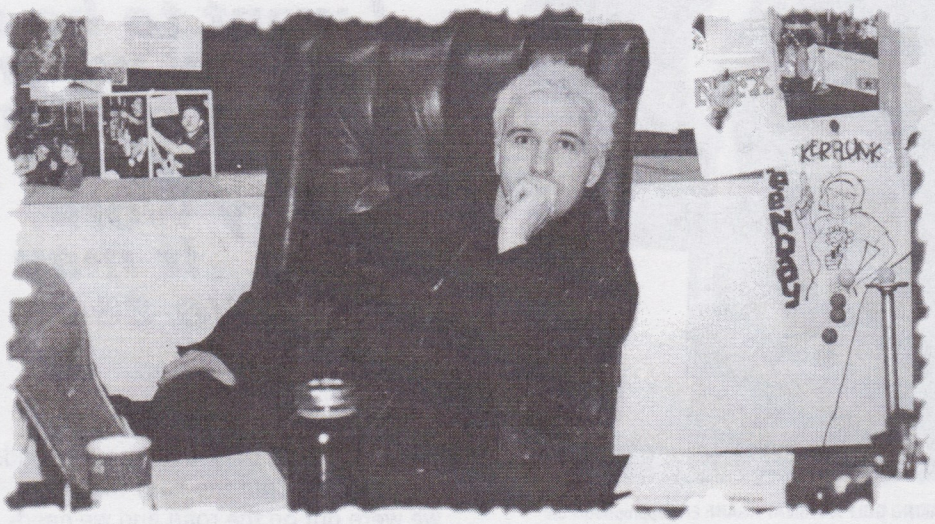
Jeffery: Yeah, bands like Samiam, Jawbreaker and Green Day. We got out of the tourist business as soon as we could and focused on the goal of printing shirts for bands.
Cinder: Samiam was our first band shirt, right? I can't remember.
Jeffery: Phoenix Ironworks was our first band shirt, but Samiam was one of the first tour shirts that we did. We did shirts for local bands, and then Samiam was going on tour and we made them about twelve dozen shirts, which was the beginning of our tour shirt business. That in turn led to our getting the Lookout Records shirt account, which spurred the second big growth of our business.

BRETT: WAS THAT ONE OF THE BIGGER STEPS THAT BUMPED YOU UP TO ANOTHER LEVEL?

Jeffery: Yeah, definitely. We've been working with Lookout for practically eight years now, and they're still one of our biggest customers.

BRETT: YOU WEREN'T MAKING PASTRIES ANY MORE BY THIS POINT?

Jeffery: I quit the pastry job about three months after we started. Our first day was really close to the date of tonight's party. It was February 1989, and I think I quit my job in June.
Cinder: I sold over $100 worth of shirts that day. I still have the piece of paper that I used to keep track of the shirts we sold. It was around $106, minus $6 for parking. The company was built on our sweat equity and Jeffery's vision. The reason we work so well together is because I'm the conservative one about money, and he's the dreamer with the risk-taking streak, and we sort of mix well. If I didn't have him, I probably wouldn't take any risks at all, and hence our venture wouldn't grow, but sometimes I've had to make him face reality by saying "we can't afford this!", and he's pretty much listened to me. I've had to learn about bookkeeping and I've learned way more about tax laws than I ever wanted to know. I think it was Larry from Lookout who told me to go to Nolo Press and buy this soft-bound book called *Small Time Operator* for $24. It provides you with the basics on record keeping and tax laws, and it even comes with forms and an accounting ledger. It's sort of an idiot's guide to starting a small business, and that's how I learned to start out on the right foot with the legal and accounting aspects. I read that book from cover to cover, and when I was unable to find a particular answer, I would ask a professional who could answer my questions. I learned how to keep records by hand but now we have computers, and we



I WANNA ROCK N' ROLL ALL NIGHT AND SCREENPRINT EVERY DAY: Jeffery takes a break from Cinder Block's daily business.

have an accounting firm to file our taxes, because I'm not a total idiot! I don't know that much about tax laws! Another book we picked up was called *How to Print T-Shirts for Fun and Profit*. We learned how to make screens and print shirts from scratch. It was all very primitive in the beginning. We didn't have all the fancy equipment we have now.



MAKING GOLF A THREAT AGAIN: Erin appropriates the choice avocation of the bourgeoisie in the name of Punk Rock. What would Lefty Hooligan think?

BRETT: AS FAR AS PICKING UP THE LOOKOUT ACCOUNT, WAS THAT A RESULT OF THE FACT THAT YOU WERE IN TILT?

Cinder: No, it was a Samiam thing. Sergie helped us with that.
Jeffery: Sergie referred us to them, and at the time Lucky was doing it, and just before that, Ernst was doing it. The Tilt connection began right around the same time, when we got on Lookout and started doing the Cinder Block thing. I think Cinder Block was first.

BRETT: ONE THING THAT I THINK MAKES YOU STAND OUT, NOT JUST FROM OTHER T-SHIRT PLACES, BUT ALSO FROM OTHER TYPES OF BUSINESSES. HAS TO DO WITH THE WAY YOU TREAT THE BANDS YOU WORK WITH. YOU SEEM REALLY WILLING TO HELP PEOPLE AND TO GO OUT OF YOUR WAY TO WORK WITH THEM. IS THAT BECAUSE YOU YOURSELVES ARE IN A BAND AND THIS IS THE WAY YOU'D WANT TO BE TREATED, OR IS IT JUST A REFLECTION OF YOUR BUSINESS ETHICS, OR IS IT A COMBINATION OF THE TWO?

Cinder: It's all that, and because there's a demand. There's a lot of competition out there but what we offer that another screen printer doesn't is "customer service". Bands have special needs that a lot of silk-screen printers don't have the first clue about.

BRETT: LIKE WHAT?

Cinder: Like being able to understand that T-shirts are the bread-and-butter of a band when they're out on the road. We found that out the hard way when we were out on the road and we needed more shirts. We had no one to call and say "ship us twelve dozen shirts to a locale two stops down the road". At Cinder Block we can do that, but I challenge you to find another silk-screen printer willing or able to give touring bands priority on the production roster, much less being able to pinpoint them on the map and follow through on the shipment until it reaches them. We're carving a niche for ourselves by meeting the special needs of touring bands. And we also have worldwide distribution capabilities to sell wholesale shirts to record stores and such. We've kept a high level of integrity regarding the way we do business. I think there have been times when if we had less integrity we could have made more money. But I want to be able to look back and say we treated employees and customers well and we provided good service and quality work. That's important to me. It may sound corny, but I've seen how not to do it.
Jeffery: That attitude also builds a loyal customer base and loyal employees. As the company has made more money, salaries have gone up here. We also provide them with full health and dental coverage.
Cinder: A couple of years ago, we didn't even have health insurance ourselves!
Jeffery: Great customers don't mean shit unless you have good people who are able to provide them with good service. We consider our personnel our best asset. Something we always worked towards providing was health insurance, sick leave, and vacation pay, and now we have those things.

I want to be able to look back and say we treated employees and customers well and we provided good service and quality work. That's important to me. It may sound corny, but I've seen how not to do it.
— Cinder

Cinder: Sometimes we have to weigh decisions, for example, should we buy this machine or are we gonna beef up benefits? Sometimes we have to go with the machine, because there are orders that we're forced to turn down because we don't have enough equipment. And if we get the machine, we can probably provide more jobs. It's not easy. There are a lot of hard decisions to make, and the IRS wants a big fuckin' bite out of everything. Everyone wants a bite of you, including the city and state governments, and there are all kinds of regulations that you have to abide by. Stuff like that is on our minds constantly. Some people see this as a big business, or they think that we're made out of money. But they don't realize that our expenses balance out our profits. Jeffery and I are living pretty modestly for a couple of people in their thirties.

BRETT: ARE YOU GUYS HAPPY WITH THE LEVEL YOU ARE AT NOW? IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU OBVIOUSLY WANT TO GROW FURTHER IN SOME DIRECTION. IS THERE A PLATEAU THAT YOU'D LIKE TO REACH, OR WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE CONSTANTLY

GROWING?

Cinder: I'd like to be out of debt. That would be nice.
Jeffery: Over the last three or four years, we've seen quite a bit of growth, and we'll probably see more. But growth always carries risk. I'd like to see things leveling off for a while.
Brett: You guys are married. How's it been getting up together, going to work together, going to band practice together, going home and hanging out together? Has that been weird? Have there been things that you needed to do to separate yourselves from one another?
Jeffery: It's always been a challenge.
Cinder: We literally did have the thing where we drew a line delineating our territories. In Cinder Block's second home in Emeryville, a little 1700-square foot place all on one level, his domain was the shop and my domain was the office. He'd better have a damn good reason to fiddle around in my desk. And if I went and told him he "missed a spot" on a shirt, that was it. It was pretty uncomfortable, but we've worked through it.
Jeffery: It's all about boundaries. Not just geographic boundaries, but also who's in control of what.
Cinder: Sometimes it seems like we're joined at the hip, but we each have our things that we go off and do alone, we have other interests and other friends. Except that sometimes I cross boundaries and look through his desk for candy, because I know he's got it hidden in there. I'm glad that we have the band, otherwise we don't have much time for each other, unless we bump into each other in the process of going about our daily routines.

BRETT: ONE OTHER POINT IS THAT I'VE NOTICED THAT YOU GUYS ARE ALWAYS REALLY WILLING TO GIVE HELPFUL ADVICE. I SAW YOU ON A DISCUSSION PANEL AT THE DIY FESTIVAL AT GILMAN.

Cinder: That's because nobody ever told me anything! Nobody told me that I'd better count the inventory at the end of the year, because you can't deduct that expense because it's an asset. I had to find that out on my own. I'll share whatever information I can. But don't be calling us up asking for silk-screening lessons, because you can get those at Laney College.
Jeffery: You can get that out of a book, or out of *Punk Planet*'s D.I.Y. files.
Cinder: Something I want to mention about the idea of a "punk rock business" is that some people subscribe to the notion that you can't be punk and be in business. And to that I say that we don't live in utopia, this is a capitalist society. A reality that we have to adjust ourselves to. It would be wonderful if we could have everyone in the world's needs met...

JEFF BALE: THINK OF HOW BORING IT WOULD BE IF EVERYBODY WAS ABLE TO GET EVERYTHING THEY WANTED IN LIFE WITHOUT HAVING TO MAKE ANY EFFORT TO GET IT. PART OF WHAT MAKES LIFE EXCITING, OR DEPRESSING AND FRUSTRATING, IS THAT YOU HAVE TO STRIVE TO ACHIEVE GOALS. SOMETIMES YOU FAIL TO REACH THEM, AND SOMETIMES YOU SUCCEED, BUT IN EITHER CASE IT'S AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE LEARNING PROCESS. HAVING EVERYTHING HANDED TO YOU ON A SILVER PLATTER REALLY DOES NOT BUILD CHARACTER. EVERYONE'S PARENTS TURNED OUT TO BE RIGHT WHEN THEY SAID THAT.

Cinder: Well, I would like to see everyone's basic biological needs met, but we have to make the best of what we have. It seems like one of the only truly renegade lifestyles still available to us is free enterprise. I don't want to sound like I'm waving the fucking flag or anything, I don't trust our government...

JEFF BALE: BUT YOU'RE REALLY TALKING ABOUT TWO SEPARATE THINGS. THE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT PEOPLE WHO



UMM...DUDE, DIDN'T I SEE THAT DRUMMER GUY WEARING A TILT SHIRT ON MTV OR SOMETHING? This picture really doesn't need a caption, does it?

ARE ENTREPRENEURS CONSTITUTE A VERY SMALL CREATIVE MINORITY THAT ACTUALLY BUILD AND PRODUCE THE THINGS WHICH BENEFIT EVERYBODY ELSE. THOSE KINDS OF PEOPLE ARE A TOTALLY DIFFERENT BREED THAN THE PEOPLE WHO SERVE AS BUREAUCRATS AND MANAGERS, THE KINDS OF PEOPLE WHO ARE LATER APPOINTED TO RUN THE ENTERPRISES THAT SOMEBODY ELSE CREATED.

Cinder: Exactly, thank you! I just wish I could get the idea across that this is a lifestyle in which you can have more freedom than you would have working for a corporation. That you can have integrity and punk rock ethics and still support yourself, and make a buck, and maybe provide some other people with a way to make a living. To be creative, and to operate in a society that doesn't offer all that many options for living a life independent of wage slavery. Where there's no chance of advancement, and there is no guarantee that your pension's going to be there when they're done with you. Starting a small business is punk as hell. The powers that be would rather see you fail. It's like being an urban pioneer. Building something from nothing with your own bare hands and against all odds. And if you fail, you can always start over. Jeffery can always make punk rock wedding cakes.

BRETT: YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE PASTRIES AGAIN?

Jeffery: Well, I'd like to go and live in Manhattan or live in London or something like that, and have pastry as an excuse to go there. Or go hang out on the beach in the Virgin Islands.
Cinder: Pastry's always a good excuse.

BRETT: YEAH, I WAS THINKING, IF YOU EVER WANT TO MAKE SOME PASTRIES, GIVE US A CALL AND WE'LL BE RIGHT OVER TO EAT THEM. MOVING ON, YOU HAVE TILT AND CINDER BLOCK. DO YOU THINK THINGS WOULD HAVE TURNED OUT DIFFERENTLY IF YOU WERE INVOLVED WITH ONLY EITHER THE BUSINESS OR THE BAND?

Cinder: They definitely feed off each other.
Jeffery: The band has definitely fed off the company, and the company has definitely fed off the band. It's impossible to say. It's like wondering if I'd moved to Los Angeles instead of moving to New York, what would have happened, you know? They both have helped each other out along the way. And, they both absorb a lot of our time.

BRETT: IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE COMPANY, WOULD TILT TRY TO GO THE "MAJOR LABEL" ROUTE AND TURN INTO MORE OF A VEHICLE FOR MAKING A LIVING?

Jeffery: No, the band was never intended to be a money-making operation, it was intended to be a creative outlet. Besides, Tilt will survive longer and make more money on a strong independent label like Fat Wreck Chords than we ever could on some major. We're happy where we are, we feel appreciated and inspired.
Cinder: My basic reason for starting a business was to support my music habit. I knew so many people who were forced to give up their jobs and their apartments when they decided to go on tour, and I wanted to have something in place that would allow me to go on tour without totally disrupting my life.
Jeffery: We've met people through the band that we've ended up doing business with, and we've met people through the business that helped out our band.
Cinder: I like the fact that I don't have to make money off of Tilt, that I have another source of income. I'm in a good situation, and that's not completely without design.

BRETT: YOU CAN PROBABLY ENJOY TILT A LOT MORE TOO, AND NOT HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT WRITING A HIT SONG.

Cinder: Exactly!

BRETT: YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT EVERYONE ACCUSING YOU OF BEING A "SELLOUT" IF YOU HAPPEN TO BECOME A COMMERCIAL SUCCESS.

Cinder: I wasn't thinking about that! I just wanted to be able to support my music habit.

BRETT: JUST TO WRAP EVERYTHING UP, I KNOW THAT IN DOING *HIT LIST*, WE HAVE FOUND OURSELVES WORKING TEN OR TWENTY TIMES HARDER THAN WE EVER WORKED FOR SOMEONE ELSE IN OUR ENTIRE LIVES. EVEN SO, IT'S THE MOST GRATIFYING FEELING IN THE WORLD KNOWING THAT WE'RE DOING SOMETHING FOR OURSELVES. IS THAT SOMETHING THAT YOU ALSO FEEL?

Jeffery: Definitely. People often ask us how it is working for ourselves. In response I always tell them that I work twice as long as I would for somebody else, and I make less money, but I don't care. I enjoy it. Even today, I come into the office, and I don't dread it at all. I work with great people, we've built up something from absolutely nothing, and it's continuing to grow and enable us to support other people. I feel so fortunate that we've been able to create this place.

BRETT: DID YOU EVER IMAGINE THAT YOU WOULD ACHIEVE THIS LEVEL OF SUCCESS?

Jeffery: Sometimes I look around and say, "wow!" But we have to put one foot in front of the other and keep working because it's an ongoing process.
Cinder: I feel grateful. Our company is more successful than we expected it to be because most businesses fail within the first three years. We're still around.

BRETT: SO THE WHOLE POINT OF THIS PARTY IS TO OFFER A BIG "THANK YOU" TO EVERYBODY?

Jeffery: The point of this party is to celebrate our tenth year, to say thanks to our employees, customers, colleagues, friends and family.
Cinder: As well as a chance to listen to Cinder Block's "hold" phone line music band, Huevos Rancheros. The musical superstars of Cinder Block.
Jeffery: And we've got a bunch of pinball games and all kinds of fun stuff, food, beer, drinks, air hockey...
Cinder: You didn't get foosball? I told you to get foosball!
Jeffery: No, we ordered air hockey instead.

JEFF BALE: FOOSBALL RULES, AIR HOCKEY IS FOR SISSIES. IT'S PROBABLY A GOOD THING YOU DIDN'T GET ANY FOOSBALL TABLES, THOUGH, SINCE OTHERWISE I WOULD'VE BEEN FORCED TO HUMILIATE BRETT PUBLICLY IN FRONT OF ALL OF HIS FRIENDS.

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HIT SQUAD

....the Cavalcade of Accolades have been pouring into *HITLIST* HEADQUARTERS since issue #1 hit the shelves...Bale's Red Transluscent *HITLIST* HOTLINE hasn't stopped ringing since the initial HURRICANE OF HOSTILITY that WAS issue numero uno...It warmed the cockles of me rhinestone studded cockbag to witness the illustrious comprades de correspondo...the illustrious and the notorious...the faded, jaded, pear-shaped and balding word meisters from yesteryear gathered in such an all-star assemblage and alphebetized to boot on the cover...So that what's left of a broken old punker's id doesn't take a bashing...What follows is my COLUMN, which doubles as a Top-To-Bottom Best To Worst...From THE SHIT to the SHITTY...IF I DONT FUCKIN' LIKE YOUR BAND YOU MAY AS WELL QUIT NOW AND GET ON WITH IT...And besides, EVERY MUTHUFUGGIN' DISC I REVIEWED LAST ISSUE GOT REVIEWED AGAIN!!?? WHAT AM I, SOME CHEEP DISHRAG HO THAT LOOKS GOOD IN CHARTREUSE PLATFORMS AND A THONG TO PROP IN YER WINDOW TO SELL MAGAZINES?? If it happens again this issue I'm dispatching THE LEGION OF VEE—a coterie of very evil young people who will pay Ed-in-Chief a little visit...who will EXTRICATE HIS FUCKIN' LIVER AND PLAY RUGBY WITH IT!! Here goes, gang...



WHAT AM I, SOME CHEEP DISHRAG HO THAT LOOKS GOOD IN CHARTREUSE PLATFORMS AND A THONG TO PROP IN YER WINDOW TO SELL MAGAZINES??

1) WHAT? STUFF Compilation of LA PUNK 1977-80 "This is the City...Los Angeles California...I was workin' the day watch out of bunko...when the call came in, there was a riot goin' on at the Masque...seems all these positively seminal punk rock bands were playin...My partner was Stimson...We checked it out and were never the same...The West Coast BLEW DOORS on the East in the late 70's Yank interpertation of PUNK ROCK...The Germs/The Dils/The Eyes/Controllers/The Skulls/Agent Orange/ and Kaos make up this absolutely NECESSARY CD...and New York had fuck all...buncha mid-70's morphed rock bands. LA had sloppy, noisy, middle class kids on dope, as any burgeoning punk scene does! We in the midwest had THE ALMIGHTY PAGANS and little else till the second wave...Out West tons of little labels like WHAT? and their ilk churned many of the greatest Punk Records ever...Lots of this shit is on here and if your holdin' out a hope of finding the vinyl...save yerself the drachmas and GET THIS!!

2) STRAIGHT FROM HELL "A TRIBUTE TO GG ALLIN on Crazy Bastard Records HOLY SPRAYIN' FECES, SCATMAN, THIS GG COMP is a dose of VILE mayhem heaved upon a Comp Weary kingdom...Yes, GG was the real deal...He lived it and died it...And in the midst of his nihilistic heroin and whiskey netherworld...he managed to spin off some damn tasty tunes. And almost all of these bands retooling GG hail from Portland, Oregon...WONDERLAND OF METH and NAZI SKINS...but alas, there's MAXIMUM CRUSH on Numerous Tracks...The Delinquents' respectable "I Wanna Rape You"...Fall From Grace's "Hard Candy Cock" is monstrously toe- tappin'...Hyperthermia's "I LOVE NOTHING" is a TUNED DOWN Bloodbath...90 Proof's "DOPE MONEY" has that snazzy superspy 60's riff with, once again, the necessary vocal carnage...Village Idiot's "I wanna Punch You In The Face"... and many other large and evil tracks await you on SNAPPY MUST HAVE PLATTER NUMBER 2 for this issue...Ok, there's a klinker here and there with some country and the like, but all in all this one is an auditory baseball bat on the sensibilities and if you—like I—lament the lack of truly BIG AND NASTY MUSIC herein lies that trip down GG's memory lane that you so desire...Ahh, I remember the time he broke a beer bottle and shoved the jagged handle up his ass, causing 2-inch gashes to the anus...Now that's fuckin' rock and roll...

3) NEW BOMB TURKS "AT ROPE'S END" Epitaph Records.... In a perfect world NEW BOMB TURKS would be HUGE...Being presented with Grammy's from presenters BRETT GURWITZ ON CRACK (he had his name legally changed) and MISTER MAGOO CORRIGAN...They'd be waxing Shania Twain's fake choppers with nightly loads of punk rock semen...They'd be on Conan weekly...The house band at the Ohio statehouse...Fuck, I don't know or care how popular they is or aint...Shit, I don't care how happenin' or not I is for diggin every godamn thing these cocky little bastards pump out...All I know is it's so IN YO FUKKIN' FACE. Though still partial to the 1st 2, particularly "Info Highway", these Clydes manage to re-arrange this 4 CHORD CRUSH IN MYRIAD MELODIOUS MALEVOLENCE on this new one...My only beef is either I'm goin' deaf [Ed.—GONE is the operative term] or the GODAMN SINGER AIN'T

TESCOVEE

LOUD ENOUGH! Other than that, gang, we are blessed with yet another exercise in youthful exuberance...But for how long can they stoke the fires of ROCK AND ROLL REBELLION? If they don't move UNITS they'll be dropped faster than 8-Ball wrappers in the corporate sieve that IS Epitaph Records...B+

4) THE DICKIES "DOGS FROM THE HARE THAT BIT US" Triple X Records The DICKIES have been around since the Punk Dawn and will prolly continue into Y2K whence they'll be releasin' the 9-CD "4 DECADES OF DICKIES" Box Set. Yet another in a long line of always clever LP titles, this one packs all covers with one bein' from that Cinematic upchuck from Matt and Trey "BASEketball...Disc opens with a poppy but righteous cover of THE WEIRDOS "Solitary Confinement", followed by URIAH HEEP's "Easy Livin"...Yours truly actually sat thru 2 hours of HEEP in 73 on Opium, and speakin' of poppy- driven vein-stabbing these guys have apparently done more than their fair share, which has nothing to do wit this review! Also included we have tunes by IRON BUTTERFLY/THE BEATLES/THE HUMAN BEINGS/HOLLIES/THE KNACK/ and DONOVAN...I still dig the DICKIES the same way I do THE STONES...As long as they're still pluggin' away it takes the edge off bein' a used-up middle-aged OLD FUCK! Besides I still got every 7" on every color and you dont!! Farty On...

5) ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN "Up From The Streets" 7" Coldfront Records. Desperate times elevate the pedestrian, which may be the only way to explain the press infatuation with these guys...They seem to have fellatio'd their way on every 2-bit hack reviewer's Boner List, but the only way I could sport wood to this lukewarm slab of processed glycol would be fast asleep and needin' to go potty...Another singer named Steve Miller? We'll rank him a distant 3rd to the JOKER SMOKER and to one of great RASPMONSTER PUNK SINGERS EVER, Steve Miller from Michigan's THE FIX...Alas, those days of greatness are but a glimmer, and if this is the future face of punk...I'm puttin' blankets over the windows and smoking crack till my ticker explodes. C-

6) THE DRAGONS "LOADED" OoooBoy, things are dropping quick as we descend into the also rans...Actually my neighbor here in the Virgina countryside really digs this, and though I find it admirable that these boys turn a cautionary ass check to the wind, I find myself head scratching and vexxed as to splain this...Someone in this band has a Johnny Thunders Poster on their wall that is fo sho...Laconic and cheesily riff-laden, but bearing an earthy legitimacy that will not allow me to dismiss this class without a good peeny whipping...Actually, in proper format I could rather enjoy this...Some shithole in Gotham, and a bottle of Old Bushmills and a carton of Marlboro Reds added to the mix, and I just might reel these throwbacks back into the boat...B

7) CORN DOGGY DOG and the 1/2 lb Skunk Records What is it, a rule THAT BANDS FROM CALIFORNIA HAVE TO SUCK? Come on fellas, don't MAKE ME COME OUT OF RETIREMENT AND KICK YOUR FUCKIN' ASSES, cuz I'm sure they stink just as heinously as this disc...If they had tarryed on their song writing as long as they doted on the THANKS list, they may have made good by accident...BUT NOOOO...Ooops, gotta run...my ride to the second hand CD shop is here...they won't want this, either...D

8) NEW WAVE HOOKERS EP Junk Records As I ponder the afterlife...and how many cockbags they found in Liberace's swimmin' pool, I occasionally find myself in 'Stuart' from MAD TV's "Dark Place"...The sun won't shine...The grass is grey, and I feel compelled to torture the lifeless junkie hooker still shackled to my basement...uh...er "dark place" wall...There is a world below depression...A place far danker, darker, and devoid of pleasure than anything you've ever known...The walls close in...but death? Not today...Torture? Yes and forever...there is no way to will the end...but AFTER LISTENING TO THIS GODAMN PIECE OF YET ANOTHER NY DOLLS WARMED-OVER HUNK OF RETRO TRASH...deafness, where is thy sting? F

9) THE ATARIS-"LOOK FORWARD TO FAILURE" FAT WRECK CHORDS A self-fulfilling prophecy if there ever was...One envisions these little Upper Middle Class fucks hunkered in Dad's cellar...Teeny peenys beating like hummingbird hearts in barely contained excitement ABOUT JUST HOW MUCH THEY SOUND LIKE GREEN DAY...Sorry Juniors, the objective is to create something NEW...Mike at FAT must have made so much fuckin' money peddling this pap to sheep—aka, young guys with HATS N' HONDAS—he's probably got his own island ike the chubby Tow Truck driver in the commercial...Oh I forgot, he IS AN ISLAND, THE FAT BASTARD! NOW MIKEY, IF YOU DO ANYTHING—I REPEAT ANYTHING—to FUCK UP THE MIGHTIEST BAND IN THE LAND, SICK OF IT ALL, I WILL PERSONALLY FLY OUT AND EVISCERATE YOUR COLON...SMOKE POT OUT OF IT AND STUFF IT IN YOUR PIEHOLE! That being said, a catharsis has swept over me and I no longer feel homicidal...Let's see, another pull on this pile of brown powder ought do the trick... Till next issue...ALL MY TURDS

TESCO VEE
P.O. Box 5542
McLean, VA 22103

FLASH!! TOO Late for inclusion in this ish's Magnanimously Hot Musical Magma...Alas, but what awaiteth Lord Tesco as he greeted the morning mail but a 10" by SILVER TONGUED DEVIL. "Over The Top" on Spain's Safety Pin Label...Whoa Nellie, take a gander at the SON OF BACHMAN TURNER OVERWEIGHT pissin' hot-lead punk at fever pitch and damn the comparisons, but BIG AND GREASY like PYGMY LOVE CIRCUS but smashin' it up like THE DEVIL DOGS...Criminy, but how doth I express that dis is the musical equivalent of gettin' liquored up in D.C. and sledgehammerin' the heads off parking meters, so contact 'em and find out for your sorry fuckin' self of what I speak...STD, 12 Victory Lane, Leetsdale, PA 15056 PSSSSSST: It's turnin' into a gadamn ass fuckin' festival, but another little frisbee ta check out is Georgia's STOOL SAMPLE, "4 Life"...Pockets of sophomoric savagery still exist...Sodden sing-alongs still reign supreme...Frenetic and kinetic and dumber than a bag o' Bibles, this one merits the Tesco Vee U.S.D.A. CHOICE seal of approval, which I will happily brand into the stinky buttocks of each and every member of S.S...Big and Good and on Defecation Nation Records ⊕

HIT SQUAD

I had the day off from work Monday thanks to President's Day, which was pretty cool. One day of relief from my Silicon Valley job where I work as a computer deprogrammer for a company called Cultsbyte, Inc. We take computers that were previously owned by religious cults, and deprogram them and return them to a useful role in society. President's Day has always been a strange concept in that it's not really clear which President's birthday we are actually supposed to be celebrating. I guess it's all of them, but a long time ago the country celebrated Lincoln's birthday separately. However, many Southern states wouldn't cooperate, so America did what it always does when faced with right-wing political extremism: it caves in. I think most Southerners are under the impression that they won the Civil War. It was a piece of cake, just ask 'em. When President's Day started they were trying to get the South to acknowledge Lincoln's birthday by combining it with Washington's birthday. They succeeded, and now the day is celebrated across the nation by sales offering 10% off on matresses, and convenience stores giving you a hot dog at half price when you buy one at regular price. Lincoln and Washington would be so proud.



For all I know Mike phones every person he knows on President's Day, since it's surely the easiest day of the year to fit Lincoln into the conversation.

On President's day I got a call from my friend Mike, who I don't hear from too often. It seemed interesting that he called on President's Day, because Mike has always been obsessed with Lincoln. He's read almost every book ever published on Lincoln, and tries to interject Lincoln into the conversation whenever he gets the chance. "Hey Mel, what are you doing today." Needless to say, Lincoln came up in the conversation. For all I know Mike phones every person he knows on President's Day, since it's surely the easiest day of the year to fit Lincoln into the conversation. A couple of facts Mike told me on the phone were actually quite interesting. Did you know that John Wilkes Booth was the country's most famous actor? A huge celebrity himself, and the son of the famous Shakespearean British actor Junius Brutus Booth, and brother of the legendary Shakespearean actor Edwin Thomas Booth, who was internationally famous for his performances here and abroad. Another thing Mike told me that I thought was fascinating is that when Booth leaped out of the Presidential box after killing Lincoln, he caught his foot in the American flag hanging there, causing him to land awkwardly and break his leg. Talk about irony!

What I haven't mentioned about Mike's obsession with Lincoln is that Mike despises Lincoln. I mean he's really obsessed, ranting about what a no-good bastard Lincoln was every chance he gets. Mike's a pretty intense guy, and it can be unnerving, especially with people who don't know him. I remember one time I was driving somewhere with Mike and we were having a perfectly normal conversation when he took something I said and somehow used it to bring up Lincoln completely out of the blue. He started to throw a fit. We were on the freeway and he started driving dangerously. He speeded up to at least 80 MPH. He was swerving and seemed oblivious to the other cars. It was scary. Finally I stopped him by emphatically telling him that nothing I'd said had anything to do with Lincoln, and that he had changed the subject completely. I told him to just calm the fuck down. It was a frightening situation, but it worked and he was able to regain his composure, much to my relief.

About a year ago I was going out to dinner with some friends, and I invited Mike to join us. They had never met Mike, who was coming over to meet us at Al's house. I figured it would be a real good idea to warn Al, Greg, and Dan about the situation. Al responded that I should not have invited the guy if he has a drinking problem. I told Al that I didn't say "drinking problem", I said "Lincoln problem", and I explained the whole thing, including the driving story. Al, Greg and Dan acted weird about it, like why are you telling us this, why would any of us be bringing up Lincoln? I explained that it's easy to bring up Lincoln around Mike if you're not careful. "Hey, don't put any pennys on the table, Lincoln's picture's on there." "Why the

fuck would we be putting pennys on the table?" "I'm not saying you would, just don't." "I won't, of course I won't. Do you think I tip in pennys?" "No, but when we pay they might bring change to the table and I can tell you right now that if there's a penny there, and it's face up, and Mike sees it, there's going to be trouble. Hey, is Lincoln on any paper money?" Greg says he thinks Lincoln is on a five dollar bill. I look in my pocket to see if I've got a five, but I don't. "Have any of you guys got a five.?" Nobody does, but Al says he thinks Lincoln is on a five. Dan says that he thinks Andrew Johnson is on a five. Greg: "Andrew Johnson's not on money, the guy was impeached. They're not going to put a guy on money who was the only President in the history of the country who was impeached." Dan: "Clinton was impeached." Greg: "Oh right, but he wasn't removed from office." Dan: "Either was Johnson." Al: "Lyndon Johnson?" Dan: "No, Andrew Johnson." Greg: "Yeah, I think he was." Mel: "You're wrong, Greg, he was impeached and aquitted." Greg: "I didn't say he wasn't." Mel: "You implied that he was removed from office." Greg: "Well yeah, but not by impeachment, he was removed from office when the next guy came in." Al: "Why was he impeached?" Mel: "For having sex with an intern." Al: "No, I mean Johnson." Mel: "I don't know, I think it had something to do with the Civil War." Al: "Isn't Andrew Johnson on a twenty?" Dan: "No, that's Andrew Jackson." Al: "I think you're wrong." Dan: "You want to bet?" Al: "Yeah, I'll bet." Dan: "Okay, here's 20 bucks that says you're wrong." Al: "Let me look at that. Hey, you're right, it is Andrew Jackson. I'm glad I saw that before I bet. " Greg: "Jackson was the President who was censured." Mel: "Yeah, he was one of the greatest Presidents we ever had, but he was the only one ever censured by Congress." Al: "Wasn't Clinton censured?" Dan: "Yeah, I think he was censured for that Watergate land deal in the '70s." Al: "Wasn't it his wife who did that?" Mel: "Yeah, but he was married to her, so I think technically they were both censured." Greg: "A censure is like a rebuke, right?" Mel: "I think they're the same, but I don't think a rebuke is legally binding." Al called into the next room to ask his wife if she had a five dollar bill. Mary: "What happened to the money you had yesterday?" Al: "I still have it, I just need to know who's picture is on a five dollar bill." Mary: "Abraham Lincoln." Al: "I was right—Lincoln." Mel: "How does your wife get the final word on the subject?" Al: "She does a lot of shopping. Women know that kind of stuff." Mel: "Oh yeah. I've got a one hundred dollar bill in my pocket, ask her who's on there." Al: "Pumpkin, who's on a one hundred dollar bill?" Mary: "President Franklin." Mel: "Yeah, she's right. Okay, everyone be careful not to flash any fivers around Mike. "What's with this guy, you invited a psycho out to eat with us." "Hey, everyone has some quirks, but he's a regular guy. Talk about basketball, he loves the NBA. Hey, if you mention the Washington team remember they're called the Wizards now, so don't go calling them the Bullets. Then Dan interupts me and Al, and says he's not sure he wants to go out to eat with us 'cause Mike sounds too crazy. Greg says maybe we should forget the whole thing. Just then the doorbell rings and it's Mike. I introduce everyone, and there's kind of an uneasy quiet. It seems like everyone is uncomfortable and no one wants to say anything. I try to get things going with, "All right, I'm hungry, who's driving?" Mike says he'll drive. Then suddenly Al, Greg, and Dan all say they want to drive. "Hey guys, the restaurant is a mile from here, I think it would make more sense to take one car instead of five cars. Call me quirky, but I think one car makes more sense, so how about if I drive." Everyone agrees and we all go out for dinner, and everyone gets along fine, and things couldn't be going any better.

After dinner we return to Al's house and turn on the TV in hopes of finding some basketball to watch, but the Warriors game had already ended. "Jeopardy!" was coming on and Dan mentions that he's never lost at Jeopardy. Since he's never been on the show I press him for details. He says that when he lived with his parents the whole family would play along. After I keep pressing for details he admits that his mother was the only one who actually played along, so the story has changed from some unbeatable champion to a guy whose mother let him win because he's such a pain-in-the-ass sore loser. Dan tells us the rules as Alex Trebeck chats with the real players. First one to get the question right gets one point, a wrong answer is minus one point. When they show the categories I see one where I think I can get all five—"Elements". I was a physics major in college, I know my elements! The show starts with the category "Rhymes With O", and the TV contestants quickly get all five, whereas none of us has even made a guess yet. A few "Opera" questions follow, and we're all still scoreless, and I can't wait to get to "Elements". The contestants go to the category "TV", and the first answer is, "Jan-Michael Vincent played a helicopter pilot on this adventure series". Greg says "What was Airwolf". He turns out to be right, and now has a one point lead. Next, "She played Lola Lasgne on the '60s series Batman". Greg nails Ethel Merman to take a two point lead. Next, "He played the Beast on CBS' Beauty and the Beast". Greg, "Who is Ron Perlman", and I'm now trailing by three and hoping the contestants will forget this category and move on to "Elements". Greg stretches his lead to four points, knowing that Benjamin was Matlock's first name. I can't believe this. I'm a lot smarter than Greg, but if none of us can catch up he'll probably be holding this over us forever. "This 90210 star played Violet on Saved By The Bell." Greg, "Who is Tori Spelling". Greg's got five points, and the rest of us are sitting there like three know-nothing idiot losers. I can't believe this. I'm feeling like the money I spent on a college education was a total waste. I don't know what Al and Dan are thinking, but Dan is real competitive, and he's the type who's willing to cheat to win. After some commercials, the defending champion on the show finally gets to "Elements". "It is the element most commonly found in nature." "What is Hydrogen", Dan and I both call out simultaneously, but Dan claims he said it first and claims the point. I've got to be faster next time, 'cause elements is my category! "At 22.59 Grams per cubic CC, it is the heav-

iest element." Mel, "Osmium". Dan agrees, "What is Osmium". We're both right, but Dan claims it's his point because I didn't put my answer in the form of a question. We are arguing about that as the next answer comes up, "It is the lightest solid element". I quickly guess "Lithium", and Dan says, "What is Lithium", which is correct, but once again he's trying to cheat me out of the point on the grounds that I didn't put my answer in the form of a question. I'm pissed now and accuse him of cheating by stealing my last two answers, but he claims he knew them anyways. "It has the highest melting point of any element". I say, "water", and Dan quickly blurts out, "What is water". Then I say, "What is Carbon", and point out to Dan that water is not even an element. He says he meant to say Carbon, but I tell him that he's a cheater, and now I know how he was able to beat his mom. "What did you do after you cheated your mom at Jeopardy, challenge her to go out in the driveway and play one-on-one basketball." Nobody's playing the game at this point, as Dan and I are having a heated dispute. I inform him that I should have four points from my elements answers, and only trail Greg by one point, but that since there is a dispute I'm not going to play anymore. After some more commercials they come back with new categories, but I'm not playing anymore cause "Elements" is totally my category, and I don't intend to be cheated. The contestant selects "Presidents" for $200, and the answer is, "His signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863 ended slavery in the United States". Mike goes nuts. He jumps up and screams, "Who was Abraham Lincoln—the biggest fucking fraud in the history of the United States, that's who! That no good motherfucking bastard supported slavery in 1860, and just signed the Emancipation Proclamation as an act of war against Americans who lived in the Southern states and would have their predominately agricultural economy destroyed by the loss of the labor needed to farm their crops. What a worthless, traitorous piece of shit. Someone should have shot that fucking fag, that would have served him right..." It's getting uncomfortable to be around Mike at this point. Dan gets up to leave, and mentions that the final score had him winning with six points to Greg's five. "Still undefeated", he announces as he walks out the door. Greg asks me if they are going to have any more questions about TV, and I tell him I don't think so, and he gets up and also leaves. Al calls me into the next room briefly and mentions that he'd like Mike and I to leave. I go back into the front room and Mike is by himself, pacing around in an agitated way, and muttering about how Jeopardy! is a deplorable propaganda tool being used to brainwash the American people. He says he doesn't think the host of the show is American at all, and that if he is, he's a traitor. I try to lighten the situation: "Hey Mike, do you know what Lincoln would say when he'd flip a coin?" "What?" He'd say, "Call it in the air, me or tails." Mike doesn't laugh, but he does calm down and tells Al he's sorry if he got anyone upset with his outburst. Al says it wasn't a problem, and Mike leaves. I'm about to leave a minute later as Mary comes in holding a five dollar bill and asks Al why he wanted to know if Lincoln was on a five. Whew, that was close. ⊕



HIT SQUAD

Stupid questions and comments I'm sick of hearing or...Shut your fucking traps you little pissants.

Your band was so much better back in 19__. Your vocals suck now and so do your lyrics.
My band sucked back in 19__. We played derivative, contrived nonsense with an occasional decent tune thrown in. I'm ten times the singer



and lyricist I was back in 19__, and if you had any taste or brains you'd know that.

The band was so much better when (insert any one of fifteen ex-band member names) were in it. The new guys suck. It's just not the same band.
Of course it's not the same band. That's the whole point. It's better. (insert any one of fifteen ex-band member names) were pains in the asses who showed up to band practice hungover and looking like they'd rather be anywhere else. They got paid a disproportionate amount of money for working all of two months a year but they were still always too goddamn busy to rehearse the songs that put food on their table. Their apathy and lack of interest in anything other than collecting their royalty checks and posing for photographs made the band suck for me, and ever since I lanced those boils it's been nothing but sunshine and lollipops around here. If you like those stooges so much, why don't you go listen to *their* fucking bands? And by the way, the new guys don't suck; they are superb. You suck.

When is your band coming to my town? Why don't you tour?
We're not *ever* coming to your town because your town is a depressing, worthless piece of shit that only exists so loser nobodies like yourself don't take up valuable space in real cities. We don't tour because we hate you. Think about it, if *you* had to be around you for more than five minutes, wouldn't you be gnawing your own leg off to get out of the trap? If my band ever plays shows again, we'll play them in the only three cities that matter in this country: Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia. And Philly's only on the list because you can do a matinee in the afternoon and go watch Sabu take the sickest of bumps at the ECW Arena in the evening.

If you hate music so much, why do you play it?
I don't hate music. I hate *bad* music; like almost everything that ever gets released. I play music because I feel it's my civic duty to do well what so many others do poorly.

I hate pop-punk. Your band and those other Lookout bands are responsible for all that shitty pop-punk out there.
Pipe down, moron. I had nothing to do with all those crappy pop-punk bands. It's not *my* goddamn fault that so many talentless, idiotic fuckheads decided my band was a good starting point for their own embarrassing careers in music. Why the hell are you even listening to all those terrible bands anyway?

Why do you like sports so much? Competition sucks.
Only losers don't like competition. Maybe you don't like sports because you're a pussy or a weakling. Just because you totally suck at something doesn't mean you can't enjoy watching others do it well. I don't *play* sports because I'm not good at them. But I don't *hate* sports because I suck at them. And I don't go ahead and try to play sports anyway just because I *like* them. Then I would be like all you idiots who play in godawful punk bands just because you like music and irregardless of the fact that your bands totally blow. Like Dirty Harry said, "a man's gotta know his limitations." But then again, most of you aren't men. You're boys. Okay, but how can you like wrestling? It's fake. So is punk rock and you like *that,* dumbass.

It's not my goddamn fault that so many talentless, idiotic fuckheads decided my band was a good starting point for their own embarrassing careers in music.

I'm a Christian and I'd like to ask...
Shut the fuck up.

Your writing used to be so much better back when you wrote for *Maximum RockandRoll.* What the fuck?
I've gotten a whole lot more intelligent. Now everything I say floats miles above your pointed little heads. It's not that I'm a worse writer; it's that I'm a lot smarter and you're a lot dumber. Over and out. ⊕

HIT SQUAD

Yassuh, here I am in *Hit List*, a place where I can really let go with both barrels of my Browning O/U. So let me ruffle your feathers with a little hot lead, okay? In *Flipside* I always feel a little restrained, not by orders or any policy, but by my respect for that great old zine and its staff. I really don't want to get TOO many rabid dogs howling for my blood at Al and Todd and pretty Holly Jo—I like those people! There has of course never been anything holding me back in my own zine *Censor This*, but *Hit List* has the advantage of actively ENCOURAGING anti-PC outrages. (Not that I need much encouragement.) Since Jeff seems to be LOOKING for offensive assholes, I have to assume that he will be delighted with the inevitable responses. He has collected a fine bunch, including some of my favorites (such as Ben Weasel and Reverend Nørb), and I'm truly proud to be numbered among the mighty spewing sphincters. When Freud made up the term "anal expulsive", I'm sure he had us in mind! In the first issue the brilliant Reverend Nørb actually said things like "fag" and "gay" in a pseudo-derogatory manner, and wuddyaknow, poor dead Tim Yo didn't rise from the grave to shut him up! Hoo-ee! This is going to be FUN!



So, people are fucking stupid—right? Their sheer dullness always amazes me. The vast majority of humanity has no idea whatsoever how to think clearly, and apparently takes great pains to avoid trying to think at all. Most people seem to prefer substituting preestablished emotional reactions for coherent thought and arguments in specific situations. So long as they encounter nothing that's totally outside of their narrow frames of reference, their shallow understandings will inevitably succumb to automatic responses. How convenient.

If "meat is murder" but abortion okay, then perhaps these idiots should be dining on fetus fricassee, zygote jambalaya and braised baby back ribs from a REAL baby!

Recently David Howard, a top aide to Washington D.C. mayor Anthony Williams, was forced to resign over his use of the word "niggardly." Another aide, Marshall Brown, who apparently does not own a dictionary and is too proud of his African heritage to stoop to use one, seems to have been the person who spread rumors throughout the city bureaucracy that Howard had used the "N-word," according to the LA Times article I read. He certainly didn't listen to the definition of the word when Howard attempted to explain it. The city employees who helped spread this rumor, and the mayor himself, should have been literate, educated people capable of opening a dictionary and discovering the meaning of the word, which derives from Old Norse and means "stingy." It is not linguistically related to the Latin word "niger", which means "black." Only a drooling moron could confuse "niggardly" with "nigger." Apparently the mayor of D.C. is such a moron, and since he bought into all that knee-jerk liberal crap—or perhaps simply because he is a spineless coward—he initially accepted Howard's resignation. Later, after the justifiable public outcry, he was forced to rehire the hapless Howard. But Howard had already been forced to humbly apologize for using a perfectly good word.

The city of Glendale, California, a suburb of Los Angeles, had many beautiful lamp posts for its street lights. They were made of rugged cast iron and dated back to the 1930s. On them was a decoration cast into the base. The decoration was an East Indian solar symbol, which symbolizes light and life. The decoration was a left-facing swastika. The word "swastika" comes from the Sanskrit, an ancient language of India. It means "welfare", in the sense that one is well, happy, healthy, etc. The OTHER swastika, the right-facing one used by the Nazis, has its arms bent in the other direction! It's not that difficult to confuse the two in the first place, but why continue complaining about the allegedly "offensive" symbol after finding out the truth? The swastika of India symbolizes life, whereas the swastika of Nazi Germany is the "anti-swastika" and is therefore anti-life. Yet year after year, the city of Glendale has been subjected to frothing attacks from dribbling cretins demanding that these so-called Nazi symbols be removed immediately. Upon receiving the information that the City of Glendale's lamp posts symbolized life, they should have been happy. But instead the complainants continued their rabid spewing forth of froth until the buildup of foam spread its off-white suds as a poisonous pall over the entire city, reaching even into the "hallowed" halls of the City Council. As a result, politicians being the invet-

erate invertebrates they are, the city is now complying and tearing out those lovely old lamps and replacing them with cheap aluminum clone monstrosities. Use your bibs, boys and girls.

Abortion. Most people are really stupid about abortion. The "right to life" advocates maintain that the fetus has a right to be born alive, whereas their opponents, the "abortion rights" people, maintain that a woman has the right to control her own body. I don't have a problem with either point of view! Both are correct! They are clearly idiots if they can't understand one another's points of view! A woman DOES have the right to control her own body and NO ONE, not a church, not a government agency, has any right to tell her what to do with it. But isn't killing a baby a horrifying abomination? A woman should understand clearly that she is taking a life, one which is pitifully dependent on her, and doing so just to avoid being inconvenienced is vile. I can clearly see that a woman has the RIGHT to have an abortion, but SHOULD SHE do so lightly?? Even if it might be moot as to whether or not she is committing murder, she is at the very least "taking the life" of an animal. (There are people out there who get more upset about taking the life of a dog or cat or cow than an unborn baby. I can only gasp in disbelief that they have their minds so antiseptically compartmentalized that the contradiction doesn't bother them. If "meat is murder" but abortion is okay, then perhaps these idiots should be dining on fetus fricassee, zygote jambalaya, and braised baby back ribs from a REAL baby!) No woman should use abortion as her primary form of birth control, and if she does so she is slime. On the other hand, no self-righteous bunch of religious fundamentalists have any right to enforce their disgust with abortion by siccing law enforcement on women. Enlisting the strong arm of the government to enforce morality is chickenshit, to say the least. The "pro-lifers" maintain that abortion is wrong, and I agree that in most instances that is true, but they have no right to bring in the cops and courts to punish women and doctors who engage in it. It's none of their fucking business! I could perhaps suggest that they try the ancient Irish practice of "shunning" the women who get abortions (shunning got historical attention last century, when the Irish did it to a certain English landlord named Colonel Boycott), but I won't because unthinking, knee-jerkoff liberals would call that "discrimination." Nyah! Dumb as the two polarized positions are in this country, they are nothing compared to the cold evil of the Red Chinese government. They FORCE women who are even as much as 9 months pregnant with their second child into confinement, where they are yelled at by teams of loyal party cadre until they "voluntarily" consent to allow an injection of Rivalor, which kills the baby through congestive heart failure and triggers labor, resulting in the delivery of a stillborn fetus. Ladies, imagine getting arrested by the cops, driven under arrest to the nearest hospital, browbeaten by bullies, and forcibly aborted! That's what they do! That's murder by the Chi-com government. Fuck those fascist [???] bastards! (This rant got a little carried away, and got off the subject of people being stupid. But hey!—if I can't go off what fun would it be? Besides, what could be stupider than fascism?) So back to the point: many people can only see half the truth of abortion—both groups ride the short bus to school. If you're "pro-choice" and think that a fetus is merely a mass of unwanted tissue, then let's open a new niche restaurant together! You cook up the little bodies and I'll be the maitre d'!!! If you're "pro-life", I have to ask you: who owns a woman's body? Does she own it? And if your answer is the one I expect—"God owns her body"—then I have to painfully inform you that you are a domestic animal like a dog or a cow or a sheep. Baaaa!

I feel really sorry for people who think punk rock karaoke is cool. They are mentally deficient. Punk rock karaoke is lame and stupid. The only people into it that aren't idiots are the oldtimers in the backup bands. The musicians are usually from different bands "back in the old days" and are probably stoked to be playing together, especially in front of an idiotically appreciative audience! What a great gig! That probably makes them wonder if they can go on stage and fart into their mikes and get applause for it. I bet most of the musicians at punk rock karaoke events are sneering at the audience, and are totally contemptuous of the inept ego-twerps who take the microphone. Punk has a long tradition of being fucked up and lame, so that means that punk rock karaoke is very punk rock, but that doesn't keep it from sucking! (Did that make sense to you? Probably not! I'll bet you're stupid also.) The following isn't racist, but I suppose you could make a case for it being "ethnicist" solely because it mentions ethnicities! (Make of this what you will, because I'm comparing them with one another! Oooh, does that hurt your widdy-biddy feelings? FUCK OFF!) Culturally there is a wide spectrum of "cool" across this planet. Some cultures are cooler than others. No culture anywhere has a more cool and smooth style than that of the American Negros...or Blacks, or African Americans or whatever the fuck they want to be called this year. In any case they have "cool" sewn up tight. American "white" culture—i.e.. the British/Germanic amalgam that is the dominant culture in this country—isn't generally very cool. In fact, we're semi-lame. Our coolest singers and musicians, people like Elvis and Iggy Pop, were heavily influenced by black culture. Most of the ones who are successful, like Pariah Carey, are on top because they ape black "coolness". (Okay, it helps that she's pretty and sexy. I'd fuck her. But certainly not if I had to listen to her sing!) Other ethnic groups, such as the Mexican and the Italian, are fairly cool in and of themselves. But there's a lot a variation both within and between cultures. Some cultures, such as the Middle Eastern, seem fairly lame in terms of their "coolness" quotient (have you ever watched videos of Middle Eastern pop musicians? They are so bad that they make Perry Como sound hip. But then Perry was a "Latin dude" who was very cool for his time). The bottom of the barrel, cool-wise, appears to be Japanese pop culture. If Michael J. Fox is the "AntiElvis", as he was portrayed in an old Mojo Nixon song, then by logical extension Japanese pop culture is the AntiCOOLth. The Japanese are the most enthusiastically clueless bunch when they let their hair down to relax (probably because they are so damned controlled at their jobs) that they create and participate in weird, inappropriate things like karaoke. Don't get

HIT SQUAD

me wrong, I don't hate the Japanese. But they did invent the abomination called karaoke. I don't mind Sony, Mitsubishi (hey, someone had to manufacture Zeros for the Imperial Air Force), Honda, etc. I like samurai movies. I dig Japanese animation, especially the porno. I like Japanese punk bands a lot, because they are so very very punk—lame, spastic, and utterly charming for it—Romantic Gorilla rules! But the bottom line is that karaoke fundamentally sucks. It is how drunk Japanese assholes employed in high pressure "suit" jobs unwind after a long stressful day sucking the bungholes of upper management. They know they are total zeroes who don't matter at all, so they massage the empty bladders of their egos by pretending to be big fucking pop stars for a few minutes. Intrinsically, karaoke has a metal attitude ("ain't I attractive & cool?"). This is the antithesis of punk, which has a '77 attitude ("I'm fucked up and crazy"), an '81 attitude ("fuck you!"), or occasionally a wrestling attitude (over-the-top faking of "I'm baad!"). And metal attitude just ain't punk rock! It's stupid. And the Japanese doing karaoke are stupid. So what's our problem, do we need to get just as stupid? Every jackass who gets up on stage to sing punk rock karaoke should immediately celebrate losing his karaoke cherry by getting the name of the biggest, wussiest metal band possible tatooed across his butt cheeks...Winger. Ratt. Dokken. King Diamond...just to prove to the world what a total loser twat he is. Nyah!

What in the FUCK is with all the alleged "punk" bands out there who sound just like other punk bands? Back in "the old days" I just listened to whatever music I liked that sounded good and ignored everything else. Lucky me. But in the mid-'90s I found myself sucked into zinedom by Pooch, his then girlfriend Chelle, and Blaze James (all of *Flipside*), plus Liz Tongue of *Censor This*. I made the frightful step of writing record reviews. Suddenly I was swamped by an avalanche of horrible mixed metaphors...er, I mean music. Every record label in sight began sending me their crap. I soon found that the majority of new bands wanted to sound exactly like other successful bands. These moronic wannabes usually want to be NOFX, the Descendents/ALL or Dag Nasty, the Ramones, the Sex Pistols, or some other famous group, or alternatively they want to produce as generic a version of Oi or NYC hardcore as one can imagine. What the fuck is wrong with these idiots? The only band which should sound like NOFX is NOFX! What the hell is with all those European Oi bands that all play the same tired, uninspired, unmelodic street-punk? Most new bands of the 90s have no originality, unlike the 80's bands, many of whom were RAD! The other night I saw a reunion of an old Long Beach band, Secret Hate, at the Whisky. Now before you get all pissy about bands reuniting "for the money" (the money is GONE baby, '94-95 is history!), let me tell you that EVEN IF THEY DID IT SOLELY FOR BIG BUCKS (unproved in this case, and not always an evil thing anyways), THEY PLAYED EXCITING MUSIC THAT DIDN'T SOUND LIKE ANY OTHER BAND I HAVE EVER HEARD!! (The taste I got from the "Hell Comes To Your House" comp was not enough to satisfy. They need to issue a full length!) This is a good thing. This is the way it's supposed to be done! New! Original! Exciting! (Allow me to make a shameless plug here for a record label owned by a friend of mine. Grand Theft Audio. GTA boss Brian, who does the Scumbag File in *MRR*, specializes in reissuing out-of-print punk and hardcore from yesteryear, back when bands were creating their own original sounds. In the GTA catalog you will find amazing, exciting music that will blow you away...AND MOST OF THE BANDS DO NOT SOUND LIKE ANYONE ELSE!! Check out Circle One, Adrenalin O.D., Human Hands, the Abandoned, Shattered Faith, and Red Scare if you want your sox nuked off.) So what the fuck is wrong with all the current bands with NO IMAGINATION, NO ORIGINALITY, and NO BALLS, who clone other bands because those bands "made it?" You are stupid fucks and should go die. Get the hell out of the punk scene and go play "Silverlake" Pop or something equally emasculated. Fuckin' morons, grumble, grumble, gripe, gripe...

—ShitEd, Tujunga, Californication



HIT SQUAD

Fuck Johannes Gutenberg. Fuck him and fuck the popularization of literacy.

Yeah, that's probably an unpopular feeling in this age of happy, smiling, patting-each-other-on-the-back educational fervor, but that doesn't change the way I feel about it. In fact, I'm all in favor of LESS education. Half the people who come out of our educational system (including myself) are just happy to get out. The majority of the rest end up in debt, overeducated and unemployed, discussing their educations with each other in conversations that are way too boring to be followed by anyone other than the pathetic academe addict.



IAN EVR

I'm waiting for this big literacy fad to end. Do I really want a literate class that includes someone who spends money to publish a list of the Top Ten People Who Would Be Cooler If They Were Straightedge? (by the way, the list includes Skeletor and Malcolm X) That's right, you heard right- someone spent money to have that and similarly worthless crap printed, in quantity, on NEWSPRINT. If the publisher of that zine is reading, I'm very sorry to use you as an example—there are far worse fanzines out there, and yours isn't bad, but can you blame me for calling you on that?

The thing that makes it a little difficult for me to write an honest appraisal of the State of Fanzines is the fact that I'm responsible for keeping friendly relations with the publishers of hundreds of fanzines, some of which are really pretty good and some of which REALLY suck ass. The heartbreaking part is that you can't tell the suckass kids their zines are bad for fear they'll call you a corporate sellout or some other cred-damaging insult in their next issue.

Which brings me to my next point (it doesn't really but fuck it, this is easier than real writing): fanzines can be effective in making a social change. With a combination of entertainment value and political commentary, zines can inspire and mobilize large numbers for action on important social issues.

But that leads to another question (seems like we're really getting somwhere now, right?): does it even fucking MATTER? Will changes enacted now make things better for people in the future, or is it simply too late? Is it, in fact, appropriate at this time to use the words of my boy Bob Peele and say "fuck you, fuck me, see you in hell."?

I'm not going to touch that issue, because as far as I'm concerned it's too tough to predict, and I don't want to be that wrong in print. Instead, I'll offer some pointers to try to make the world of fanzines a sweeter place for losers like me to inhabit. To editors and publishers: 1. When you are reviewing a band and would like to include some extra info, be sure the shit you throw in there is comprised of facts and not just some shit you made up. For example, don't write that a band is vegan just because it seems like they might be. Remember, people are looking to be informed by your publication—it's your duty to check facts. 2. If a band is more than 1 or 2 years old or has been in a few zines before, people already know how they got together. Consider omitting that question. 3. If the local record store/Taco Bell/delicatessen ripped you off, or if you have anything else to say about it, tell your friends. Don't use part of MY natural resources to tell the world about it. 4. Space in your zine is worth money only if PEOPLE WILL SEE IT. If you only print 200 copies of a zine, more power to ya, I hope you succeed, I'll support you morally and otherwise, but please don't ask for money.

At this point I need to stop being a dickhead to the zine kids and admit that one of the problems with fanzines was actually caused by labels like the one I work for: hardcore labels who found themselves selling a lot of records and could suddenly buy "presence" in a fanzine by paying the easily managable price of $50 or whatever for two full-page ads. The inevitable backlash to this was the advent of zines that printed 1000 copies and charged $100 for a half page.

Is it worth it? Is it worth paying Kent McClard $200 for a half-page ad when he editorializes about whether he should even review our stuff? Was it worth sending our stuff to MRR for review after I was told they would not accept ads from us because "someone at the label is religious"? Is it fair that tiny labels have to pay $200 for a half-page just because EVR, Rev and Victory can afford it?

It doesn't sound fair, but I can't think of any way to make it so. It's unfortunate, because we believe in encouraging small labels to step up—some of the best music in the world is coming from labels like Hydra Head and Ferret, each a label run by a guy out of his bedroom. While we certainly feel a bit of a spirit of competition between us and Revelation, and there is no love lost between EVR and Victory, when it comes to the smaller labels who put out great music, we'd love to see them come up the same way we did. And what the fuck is stopping them, after all? Hopefully not people like us.

In conclusion, I'm feeling too lazy to wrap this up, but hopefully I made a few points. I welcome comments and conversation about any of the stuff I brought up in this column. You may write me and I will be happy to debate all this shit further - maybe we can make it a public debate.

The Hitlist people wanted something angry but instead I wrote some whiny, rambling shit. I forgot to tell them that's the kind of shit I write. Oops. Ian evr

HIT SQUAD

CLUB PASSIM, CAMBRIDGE, MA 1/14/99
Cover Charge: $5.00 (performers and guests not excluded)
Rules: One song per sucker

Crowd: House is packed (Tuesday night); unlike most of these affairs, audience sits attentive and all efforts are loudly applauded. Far from the presence of a gong, onstage dude can do no wrong. Let's take a peek:



White-haired white man, presumably 40 something-ish, plugs his wired acoustic guitar in the house PA, sets his ass down on a stool, pulls the mike to his kisser, and he looks, well, way way solemn. There is going to be a pronouncement. It's coming yes, yes, here it is, he says: "This is as relevant NOW, I think, as it was then. STOP THE BOMBING!!.." The buzzwords here, forecasting an unbearable 4 or 5 moments of patronizing nostalgia to follow, are : This and...then. Because, you see, we are going to discover (there's no way out of this [really]), how this = then . Are you ready? He is. Here he goes:

"This is an Hispanic, Catholic city and you're launching leather mutants on SUNDAY??", the station manager was pissed.

"White Biirrrrrrrd..."

The fool's retro-yap has been opened for two seconds, maybe three. The audience is silent with reverie. It's A Beautiful Day in the early evening—so they think. You can see it—they are thinking this. And he finishes to a standing ovation, expresses thanks and once again "STOP THE BOMBING." Yes, yes, that omnipresent, infernal bombing that just never fucking stops...Stop it!

The stage clears quickly—peace-dude ambles off, and what have we next? Big Asian woman, late 20s. She places a boom-box on a table, miked. She's wearing this gold-sequined blouse and tight black skirt which stretches even tighter over a tightly wide ass. She sweeps her fingers thru her long black hair, tosses it back, turns on the boom, bb-boom. Booom, booom, booom. b-b-boom, b-bb-b-b-b-boooooooom!!! On top of this clatter, she clutches the front-stage lead mike w/a sweaty paw and gets into the rap:

"Mama Fortune Cookie! What they call me -
But they don't know—what they can't see
You can open me up, and read what it say
But the fortune you get—not no fortune my way!
Cos I this snaptrap don't hafta show no pussy
Mr. MAssachusett man , w/your wrinkled old dick yo so wussy
I say stay away from Fortune Mama, Mr. New England man I say stay away from my cookie, you understand?

Mama Fortune breaks but she don't read what you like
You snap her in half, but she no Far Eastern dyke
You pull out the paper to read what it say
And it say "Don't Fuck With Fortune Cookie Mama that way"
That what it say. Oh Yeah. That's what it say. It always say... "
booom bb-bb-boom, booom, boom, bb-b-b-b o o o o m BOOOOOOOMM!!!

Wild applause from the Passim Club crowd ("Right on, sister" screams an aroused grandma next to my table. She's shaking her fist in the air with abandon.) Even the bouncer at the door has been moved (fist pumping airborne high fives, but these seem more tabloid in support , as if they were shrieking out "Jer-ry, Jer-ry, Jer-ry" !!) Mama Fortune Cookie ambles off the stage with her traveling rap-PA . This exodus induces a standing ovation, unclear whether it's related to some sort of ethnic support or actual genuine affection. My applause was directed more for, say, the Mel Brooks aspect of this, but no matter. Whichever way you look at it, the Fortune Cookie Woman Mama's a hit. At least this $5 per performer-chump scam at this dump of a club offers some quality seconds of pubic hair angst.

Unfortunately, the duration of such quality is limited

GREGGTURNER

to
Mama Fortune's one wild hog rhyde. Following this, we get a Jim Croce resurrection, some imbecile who can't let go of Boz Scaggs and lots and lots of...BLUES...Oh, is there anything else WORSE in the western world than the requisite whiteman 12-bar blues improv?

But hey—$5 down at the door, you can be Eric Clapton or Eric Moore or any of those lamebrain recycled packages from Texas (or Eugene, Oregon) that churn out this crap ad nauseum.

Which is an appropriate place to segue: American culture ad nauseum. At nauseum. You want vengeance for capital crimes: replace lethal injections with forced listenings of Madonna or Shania Twain, imposed sightings of Entertainment Tonight (eyelids a la Clockwork Orange forced open to take in a revolving looped countenance of Mary Hart in perpetuity). We have reached, ladies and gentlemen, the equilibrium point, the homeostasis of laissez-faire capitalism on the "free" market of culture: art evolved (in the Darwinian sense of market dynamics) as a forced enema. Now, when you think "forced enema," e.g., the mind's eye generally gravitates to, say, JOAN BAEZ or Arlo Guthrie. But I'm talking something way more insidious as a process. That is, the MODEL of Joan Baez and Arlo Guthrie. And Mary Hart and Celine Dion (etc.) veritably enemated (my word) up your butthole. And this must be regarded as intrusive penetration—you weren't consulted.

There's an appropriate metaphor (disguised as a true story) that may help to amplify this point. For five years (1993-98) I habitated a place that (rather gratuitously) calls itself "The City Different"—Santa Fe, New Mexico. (Recently, w/aspirations of jump-starting a stalled and constipated career as a collegiate math academe, I accepted a gig at Clark University [Freud's only US college-campus talk-stop when he visited stateside, so they say], which required re-location to what must be the most abysmal swill pit in the entire country—Worcester, MA—an incredible underbelly of urban blight. A city built upon its own societal pus—but I digress). While in Santa Fe, you won't believe this!, I managed to sneak onto the AM radio talk-show airwaves! KVSF ("The Voice") 1260 AM, the only talk-radio on the dial, mostly bad syndicated pipe-ins ("Dr. Laura," etc.) during the week, but Saturday and Sunday, free-for-all time. Here's how it worked. Pitch a concept to the station manager. If he grooves, then you're ON! and ON means 1 hour (at the assigned time slot) each weekend. What's the catch, you ask? OK, OK, it costs $65 (you pay THEM!). But that's a pretty cheap donation for an hour of LIVE (no delay!) radio and a potential listening audience of 100,000. And 4 sponsor ads at $16.25 each cover the price of admission. So I proposed the following concept: Howard Stern meets the X-Files!, e.g., alien-abducted lesbians (figured there had to be at least 2 of these in Santa Fe) wishing to remove their rectally probed implant devices (Art Bell one better, eh?). This flew in the face of the catalog of other shows/themes offered on the weekend. Stuff like "Crystal Energy When It Is Called For," or "Homeopathic Love Rites," etc.

We called the show "The DIFFERENT City Different" (!) and we were "on" from 3-4PM Sunday afternoons. We had graverobbers (proper shoveling techniques and what to do when you "hit coffin"), and alien abductees (non-lesbo versions)—this one woman described her "reward"
for putting up with "what must have been hours" of examination: an extraterrestrially-induced orgasm in the saucer's command control center. Got into trouble for the first time when we brought on these dominatrix/bondage fetishers from Albuquerque. Warned not to do it again ("this is an Hispanic, Catholic city and you're launching leather mutants on SUNDAY??", the station manager was pissed). More dire fallout: the one (and only!) sponsor ($50 tho!), the Pyramid Cafe, played along with the show's theme. Well at least the Boheme co-owner who thought it'd be funny to talk about "whipping up an appetite for hummus." Unfortunately, his born-again (ex-Marine) partner did not share the humor—no more falafel ball comps—or ad money. We did it again (the show ran for 9 months—a fitting gestation). 2nd time the bondage gals came on, we had a "forced feminization" and live spanking on the air. I think we could have slipped thru the censor's knot (station mgr was, uhm, a fan—at least enough to monitor what the hell was going on) even this time around had it not been for the last two or three minutes. The gruff, burgeoning-ly large dominatrix known as The Goddess Glory, who had been wailing on a volunteer's buttocks to demonstrate proper spanking etiquette, became suddenly agitated and declared her subject a "bad slave." She then resolutely announced that she was prepared for this eventuality; a black medical bag was produced (where did this come from?) and our slave was threatened with what looked like a foot-long cattle prod. The slave, up til this point a good sport decked out in bra and panties and lipstick for his "forced feminization," became seriously agitated (this wasn't part of the deal). In a flash, he bolted out of the studio into the middle of heavily-trafficked St. Francis Blvd., while the Goddess Glory spoke of the consequences such slovenly slavish antics would ultimately incur. All in all, a fine hour of family entertainment, except that the station manager this time (apparently) had a brain aneurism. More than a handful of listeners complained that their ride home from church, their day with the Lord, had been "contaminated." So the plug was pulled, the contaminant and contaminators purged from the AM airwaves of holy transmission, and I think the following week in our slot they had these vortex-energy morons from Sedona.

Anyway, we were talkin' about metaphors to the cultural abyss of open mike nites and a-r-t as we f-i-n-d it in Amerika today. So lemme tell you about one other show radio segment we produced (amidst the spree of 36 over nine months).

You see, the problem with having to maintain a week-

ly stable of lunatics as guests (one old bearded geezer walks around town, a ubiquitous presence, in a wedding dress—his nomadic sojourn a mystery apparently to the entire town) is reliability—e.g., what happens when the bug exterminator, who's s'posed to talk about the time a black widow crawled up his left nostril (dig the the continuing theme of orificial pervasion here), what happens when he's a no-show? The only thing you can do, 5 minutes before air time, is reach for the alternative health classifieds in town and make some live on-the-air phone calls. Let's seee...Oh, this one might work: "CAFFEINE ENEMAS FOR ALLERGIES." Yeah, let's give that a try! So, y'know, we dial, and the woman who performs this service agrees to take us through the procedure. Graphically (cool!). "First," she says " I will hold your hand and spiritually attune myself to the discordant energy in your colon. After all, you wouldn't just pick up ANY musical instrument and expect symphonic rapture without tuning first." She has a point, I allow. "After we are spiritually tuned, I will take you to the...wooden platform. You will lie down on your back, on this table, with your garments removed and your butt cradled in the butt-aperture. There are now two tubes. One is for irrigation—it pumps a solution of coffee and ionized spring water at room temperature. The other is for excavation—it forcefully suctions the contents of the bowels once you have been sufficiently and adequately irrigated. There is a pail into which the excavation tube empties. And there are mirrors placed below the table so that you are permitted, I should say encouraged, to observe what is being dislodged and removed. Now, I urge my patients to insert both of these tubes to get the process started. However, some are reluctant and if this is the case I will assist with the initial positioning and placement. Psychologically speaking, I feel that self-insertion bolsters autonomy and self-esteem so I really motivate my clients to...give it a try. If they are successful, or even make the attempt, I stand back and give them a BIG ROUND OF APPLAUSE!! I should point out to your listeners that there can, however, be a wide range of emotions displayed. Frequently there is...weeping."

"Weeping?" Her voice began to trail and fade, my engineer on the other side of the studio's glass partition, frantically signaled to keep the woman animated. Her signal was fading. "Why weeping?"

"Weeping because...well, weeping is inevitable. When they look into the mirrors and see what comes out of their behinds into the pail, they invariably weep. They must weep. And I weep with them. I am holding their hands and tears are streaming down my cheeks. We are weeping together because we are celebrating the joy of colonic liberation. JUST LAST WEEK I WEPT WITH A MAN, I BELIEVE HE WAS AN OPTOMETRIST. HE INSERTED HIS OWN TUBES. I WAS VERY PROUD OF HIM, THIS WAS A BIG FIRST STEP. BY THE TIME THE EXCAVATION TUBE WAS DOING ITS THING, HE BEGAN TO MOAN LIKE A FARM ANIMAL. HE WAS A GROANING, TORMENTED SOUL. A BIG FAT COW WITH A HALF MOUTH OF CUD. THERE WAS AGONY AND LIBERATION. AND I WAS GROANING WITH HIM. WE WERE BOTH FIXATED ON THE MIRRORS. RED AND GREEN AND PURPLE WERE FLOWING OUT OF HIS HIND INTO THE PAIL. YOU SEE...THESE WERE CRAYONS THAT HE HAD EATEN AS A SMALL CHILD AND THAT HAD IMPACTED IN HIS BOWELS FOR 52 YEARS!! I SAID TO HIM, LET THE COLORS FLOW!!!!! LET IT ALL COME OUT!!! TIME TO PUT OUR COLORING BOOKS AWAY...PUT OUR CRAYONS BACK IN THE BOX AND FROSTY THE SNOWMAN BACK ON THE SHELF!"

"When they look into the mirrors and see what comes out of their behinds into the pail, they invariably weep.They must weep. And I weep with them. I am holding their hands and tears are streaming down my cheeks. We are weeping together because we are celebrating the joy of colonic liberation."

Do you see the point I'm making? Open mike at Club Passim in Cambridge could just as well be open mike night at the poolhall in Spearfish, South Dakota. It doesn't make any difference, the parts are all entirely interchangeable. Celine Dion IS Mary Hart IS Joan Baez. Phish inherit the stillborn twirl-head progeny of Jerry Garcia, so whether fatso croaked or not doesn't really matter. It's all the same—it will always be this way. The pieces fall in place and you eat it up. So fuck you all for being so blind and stupid and content and boring. I guess that's the point I'm trying to make. I.e., you've let her insert the tubes every time and you're not weeping with what you see coming out. Y'know? ⊕



Straight Outta Kansas

Me First and the gimme gimmes

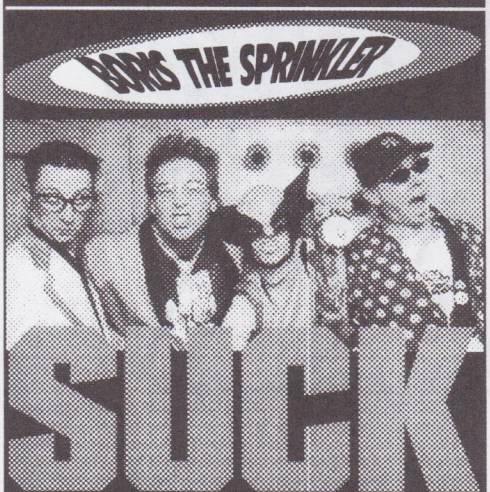
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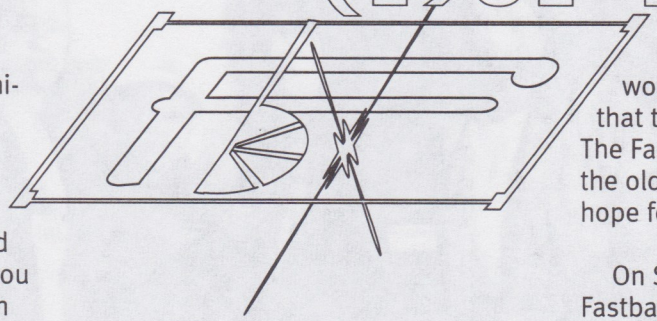
"Have You Had Enough?" Part 2. (1981-1989)

by Scott Lee

The Richard Stuverud Years, Pt. 1

Duff's last show with the Fastbacks took place on July 24, 1981 at the Gorilla Room. Kurt and Co. wasted little time finding a replacement for McKagan. Richard Stuverud would assume the drummer's chair a little more than a month later (his first show was August 26). The tryouts, however, were anything but quick and easy.

After placing an ad in the Rocket (a local Seattle music paper), the Fastbacks tried out what seemed like a million different drummers. None of them seemed to pan out, either in terms of playing style or musical philosophy. Kurt recalls one drummer wanting to play flute as part of his contribution to the band. After a short talk with most of these prospective drummers, Bloch would invariably tell them, "I don't think you are gonna like our band." Based on the way they set up their kit, Kurt could sense if he was going to like the way they played, even before a single beat was tendered. After becoming totally sick of trying out drummers who didn't fit the bill, the Fastbacks got a call from Stuverud. Richard was a young and ambitious high school kid who had been trained and groomed on the skins. Regardless, Kurt almost didn't want to give him the time of day. Instead of setting up a rehearsal, he told Stuverud (over the phone) to go buy the first Fastbacks single and then to call him back if two conditions were met: 1) he liked it, and 2) he could play the songs. Much to Bloch's surprise, Richard called him back a couple of days later, set up an audition, and proceeded to fill the coveted drummer vacancy of the Fastbacks. He ended up being a better drummer than any they had played with previously, but this should come as no surprise given that his predecessors (Kurt and Duff) were 'string' players first, and drummers second.



Line-Up circa August 1981:

Kim Warnick Bass and Vocals
Lulu Gargiulo Guitar and Vocals
Kurt Bloch Guitar
Richard Stuverud Drums

Little did Stuverud realize that he was joining a band that would persist all the way through the 80's, 90's, and beyond (and since they 'formed' in late '79, the Fastbacks could easily span at least four decades before all is said and done). Richard would ultimately write his ticket in the Fastbacks as the first of what I refer to as 'the Significant Four' drummers. Of the more than one dozen drummers who have played with the Fastbacks over the past 19+ years, only four really have distinguished themselves as to warrant extended discussion for their contributions (Nate Johnson, Rusty Willoughby, and current Fastback Mike Musburger are the other three). (see sidebar)

The genesis of Richard Stuverud as the third Fastbacks drummer was merely a foreshadowing of how things would always seem to work for the band. While Kurt's first impression of Stuverud was characterized by trepidation and skepticism, Richard would end up playing with the band for many years to come. Bloch's "forefront pessimism" and low level of expectation would pervade the band throughout their existence, ultimately this may explain why the Fastbacks have been able to sustain themselves for as long as they have. Throughout their history they have encountered endless setbacks and "disappointments", but all the while I think they were grounded in the knowledge that these sorts of things would happen, and specifically that they would happen to them. The Fastbacks are a living example of the old saying: expect the worst, but hope for the best.

On September 26, 1981, the Fastbacks played an in-store appearance at a record store on Aurora called Everybody's Records (Tom Dyer, who would later start Green Monkey Records, was an employee there). Kurt remembers this show as being unique in the sense that the Fastbacks played many cover songs that are not traditionally part of their standard repertoire (he has no documented recordings of this show, so if anyone does, please e-mail me). Back in the early 80s, it was not uncommon for the Fastbacks to play such odd covers as the Young Rascals' "Good Lovin", Grand Funk's "We're An American Band", or even the Beatles' "Eight Days a Week". One has to wonder what songs were played at this in-store, and how they might later make sense in the grand scheme of Fastbacks' lore.

"FIVE FAVORITES"

After only 8 shows with Richard on

THE SIGNIFICANT FOUR vs. THE REST

Drummer	Studio Recordings	% of Songs
Mike Musburger*	44	27.5%
Nate Johnson	38	23.8%
Rusty Willoughby	27	16.9%
Richard Stuverud	25	15.6%
TOTALS	134	83.8%
Other 6 "studio" drummers	26	16.3%

* Mike's share includes 13 new songs that have not been released. While there are numerous other tracks which have not been released (and not counted in the above totals), these 13 are counted because they will in all likelihood make-up what is to be the next Fastbacks record (which has yet to be released as of 2/99). Furthermore, there is one new song that has no drum track that has been included as part of the 'other' category.

the drums, the Fastbacks recorded the "Five Favorites" EP on December 6th (according to my calendar)—the liner notes for the "And His Orchestra" CD put the recording on December 9th—at Wave Studio in Vancouver, WA. Overdubs, additional mixing, and production were completed in March of 1982 at Thunder Oak and Crow Studios in Seattle. Peter Barnes, who also happened to be the drummer of the Enemy, produced these sessions. Barnes would later hire the Fastbacks 16 years later to record music for a Spokane healthcare radio commercial! A Fastbacks' friend, Brian Fox, would get credit as "Executive Producer" of "Five Favorites" for putting up the financial support to pay for the recording [not exactly a Peter Grant]. This EP (released in July of 1982 on No Threes) features 5 songs, most notably the opening track, "In America". "In America" displays Kurt's songwriting at its peak. The song exudes a sarcastic attitude about accepting situations that could ideally be better, but which are good enough under the circumstances. The epic instrumental bridge and final closing lines punctuate a song representing a quasi-punk rock national anthem:



While Bloch used the Fastbacks as an outlet for his songs, Lulu perceived it as a vehicle for her ambitions.

"Who says the government's on your side? Think for yourself—who cares what they decide?"

Everything about "In America" is trademark Fastbacks, and it's a positively blissful 4 minute and 39 second journey for any astute listener.

The Fastbacks played their first show of 1982 on January 9th at a place called the Athens in Seattle's Belltown district. The Athens is mostly notable due to the fact that it would later turn into the Crocodile Café (which was started and owned by Stephanie Dorgan, who would later go on to marry REM's Peter Buck). The Fastbacks would play 6 more shows that year before "Five Favorites" would be released in July. Prior to the record release party on July 30th, both Lulu and Richard quit the Fastbacks. Richard left to pursue more "serious" musical challenges.

Lulu's departure, however, was prompted by the constant bickering sessions between her and Kurt. Back in the Fastbacks' early days, most shows and rehearsals were set up by Lulu. What she lacked in songwriting contributions, she more than made up for by "managing" the band. Often this would result in her having arguments with Kurt about a variety of band-related issues, whereas Kim remained non-confrontational, only speaking her mind when she thought it necessary. Lulu's own self-determination and drive in support of the Fastbacks as a band was in stark contrast to Kurt's role as songwriter. While Bloch used the Fastbacks as an outlet for his songs, Lulu perceived it as a vehicle for her ambitions. What had started as just something fun to do had turned into a potential career for Lulu, not that it wasn't for Bloch, but Kurt was much more creatively focused than big-picture driven. When Lulu saw that her expectations were not being met, she bolted. For the first time, the Fastbacks appeared like a band that had broken up.

Given the tenuous circumstances surrounding the band's status, the release party for the Fastbacks' "Play Five of Their Favorites" EP didn't even include them on the bill. The Silly Killers and the Living were the only scheduled performers. But when the former were deemed "inappropriate" by the venue, Lulu and Richard decided at the last minute that they would play the show. It would prove to be one of the last for the Fastbacks in 1982, although they played one more show in October with this line-up, and then one show in Vancouver with Ian Tiles of the Pointed Sticks on drums. When the year concluded, Lulu had rejoined the Fastbacks but Richard had not.

Danny Zakos

1983 marked the entrance of the 4th Fastbacks drummer, Mr. Danny Zakos. By all accounts Zakos was an odd person, but also a great drummer who had a funny sense of humor and many unique theories about life. After answering an ad in the *Rocket* in late 1982 or early 1983, Danny's first FBX indoctrination occurred on February 12th at the Showbox, a

show which is also notable because TSOL were also part of the bill. In a weird small world footnote, Danny was friends and ex-roommates with the guitarist for the Bombardiers, a band that featured both Al Bloch and Richard Stuverud.

The Fastbacks were scheduled to play the Showbox with DOA on Feb 25, but the promoter cancelled it at the last minute. As a gesture to make up for this cancelled show, the Fastbacks were given an opening slot for the Ramones. On May 5, 1983, the Fastbacks played Eagles auditorium with their idols and punk pioneers the Ramones. To this day, that show will go down as one of the landmark events in the Fastbacks' career. Not because it was a particularly great performance, but more because it was a show with the fucking Ramones!

The only documented recordings of the Fastbacks with Danny Zakos on drums did not see the light of day until 1992, when the Ded Beat label released the "Now Is the Time/Sometimes/Was Late" 7". The first two songs were recorded on June 6th of 1983 in the former Fastbacks rehearsal space in Seattle's Pioneer Square district. Both songs are straight ahead punk rockers, with "Now Is the Time" blistering the turntable from the outset with a killer Bloch solo passage which then explodes into a driving chorus that features Kim and Lulu singing in unison. Once again, the lyrics reflect the mindset of someone trying to make the most of a difficult situation, but at the same time being unwilling to take responsibility for changing the way things are. Take a hint of optimism and shroud it with overt skepticism, and what you come up with is unmistakable.

"Now things aren't so wonderful,
things aren't so good, but not unsolvable,
it's just that no one wants to say that they're responsible"

In September of 1983, the Fastbacks had a scheduled gig at the Metropolis. Problems occurred when Kim came down with mono. Rather than cancelling the show, this marked the one and only appearance of Al Bloch taking over the bass and vocal duties (which he split with Lulu) for Kim. In essence, this leads me to the conclusion that Kurt Bloch is the only member of the Fastbacks who has ever played every single show.

The First Tour

The first Fastbacks tour took place in January of 1984. Lulu made all the arrangements, from getting a van to working out their itinerary. The tour consisted of four shows in California from Jan 19th to Jan 22nd (Berkeley, LA, Sacramento, and Berkeley). They ended up playing with such punk luminaries as Toxic Reasons, D.I., and TSOL (note: the first show was supposed to be with Samhain, but they cancelled). Duff came along with the Fastbacks as their first "roadie".

By the end of this tour, the Fastbacks didn't play another show for about two months. During this time Zakos was getting more and more disillusioned with playing in the Fastbacks. His interest in the band was waning, so they used Stuverud for the recording of the "Everyday Is Saturday" EP while Danny was still a member of the band (it didn't help that Zakos was also missing practices). Danny would play 7 more shows with the Fastbacks before quitting on May 5th, 1984, a little over 16 months after he played his first show.

"Everyday Is Saturday" & the Return of the "Stuvagroove"

The "Everyday Is Saturday" EP was recorded in two chunks, the first of which took place on March 21, 1984 at Crow Studio in Seattle. It was recorded on 16 tracks and later completed on May 30th at ESP studio in Bellevue. Steve Marcus graciously provided funding for this record. It was released in October on No Threes. The EP features 4 songs (3 originals, 1 cover) and also marks the debut of Kurt as a producer. The highlight of the EP is the closing track, "What Will They All Say?", a song that still manages to occasionally appear in their live shows:

"I know that things will be different someday. I might live my life a completely different way. I also know that if I do I'll always remember the way it was and wish I could have stayed."

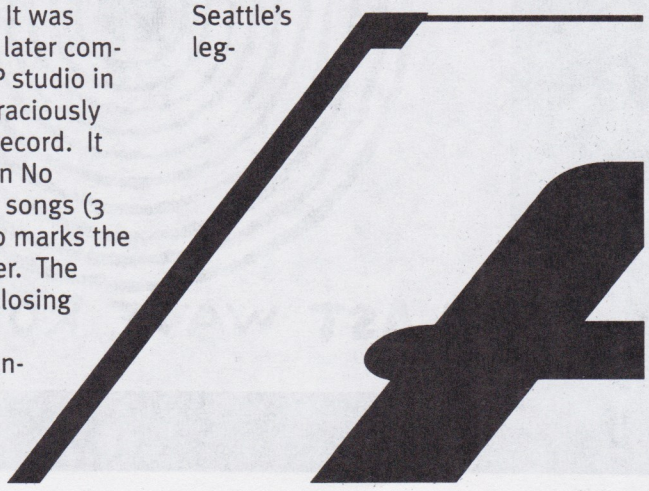
Richard's second official stint with the Fastbacks began at a show for Bumbershoot in late August of 1984. But for a few more months he would continue to hem and haw about his role as their drummer.

Tad Hutchison

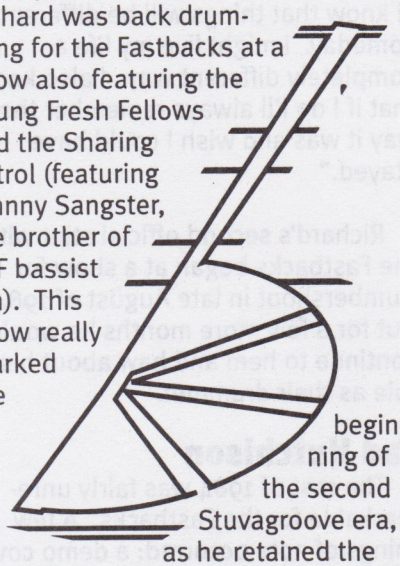
The rest of 1984 was fairly unremarkable for the Fastbacks. A few things of note occurred: a demo cover of "Oh Come All Yee Faithful" was recorded on November 25th (never released, never substantiated), and Young Fresh Fellows' drummer Tad Hutchison filled in for Richard for one show at the end of the year. It was a show in Vancouver at the New York Theater, and to date it is remembered by Kim as the "fastest Fastbacks show" ever played. Richard came back 3 days later to restore order to the FBX court at a show that ironically featured none other than Tad Hutchison and the Young Fresh Fellows.

Tom Hendrikson begats Stuverud, pt. 2

Given his obligations to the Bombardiers, Stuverud was still reluctant to play with the Fastbacks full time. The first half of 1985 saw the Fastbacks only playing two shows through the end of March. They also tried out a drummer who didn't quite pan out. Tom Hendrikson played one show with them on April 6th with Seattle's leg-



endary Fall-Outs. The next night Richard was back drumming for the Fastbacks at a show also featuring the Young Fresh Fellows and the Sharing Patrol (featuring Johnny Sangster, the brother of YFF bassist Jim). This show really marked the beginning of the second Stuvagroove era, as he retained the traps chair until the end of 1986.



Chronological Fastbacks Drummers, 1979-1986

1 - Kurt Bloch
2 - Duff McKagan
3 - Richard Stuverud
4 - Ian Tiles (1 show)
5 - Danny Zakos
3b - Richard Stuverud
6 - Tad Hutchison (1 show)
3c - Richard Stuverud
7 - Tom Hendrikson (1 show)
3d - Richard Stuverud

The 2nd Fastbacks tour occurred between May 17th and May 22nd of 1985, and was a West Coast swing with DOA (they also played shows with the Dicks and the Circle Jerks). It is mostly notable for a show played in Reno, Nevada at the Skate Plus where they covered Van Halen's "Everybody Wants Some". The first show after the tour took place on June 8th at the Gorilla Gardens. This is significant in that it was an opening slot for the soon-to-be-famous Guns and Roses. It is all the more remarkable because it was the first ever "out of town" show for G'N'R. To add insult to injury, the G'N'R van broke down only 100 miles out of Los Angeles (about 1100 miles from Seattle). Axl, Slash, Duff, Izzy, and Steven had to hitchhike the rest of the way!

1985 was not the most prolific year for Fastbacks recordings. On July 9th and 10th they recorded the "If You Want to Slow Down, Step On the Gas" demo cassette. September 22nd marked the recording of the song 'Time Passes', which was later to appear on the Green Monkey compilation LP, "Monkey Business":

"Time goes by so fast, when you live each day, as if it were your last, as if it were your last. Our history is past, I wish I could re-live. Time has already past, time has already past!"

"And His Orchestra" and 1986

The first Fastbacks full length LP was recorded over three different periods. Originally conceived as a potential 45 rpm 7" release, the first recording took place at the old Egg Studio location (on 8 track) on January 22nd. This session resulted in 5 songs, including such Fastbacks classics as "Wrong, Wrong, Wrong", and "In the Winter" (both of which would appear as singles in the UK a

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few years later, but not in the States). Two more tracks ("Call It What You Want" and the Sweet cover "Set Me Free") were recorded on July 9-10 at the Pioneer Square rehearsal space on Scott McCaughey's 4-track. The final 4 songs (along with a version of the Dictators' "Exposed", which was not released until 1998, and only in Spain) were recorded on August 17th in Kurt's basement with the aid of Curt Anderson's 4-track reel-to-reel recorder. These sessions were never really intended to be the makings of an "album". It just so happened that by December of 1986, the Fastbacks found themselves with enough new recordings to fill a full length record. 1986, however, was largely unmemorable, as they only played 17 shows in total, and only 2 shows outside of Seattle. The Fastbacks' last show of 1986 also happened to be Richard's last real show. Little did anyone realize that this September 1st Bumbershoot show would also be the last Fastbacks live appearance for 9 months.

At this point in their "career", the Fastbacks had been together for over 6 years. They finally had a full-length record to show for it, but they also were left without a drummer. Interband relationships were also getting increasingly strained. As Lulu started devoting less time to the band and more time to her burgeoning career as a filmmaker, her interest in the Fastbacks waned. Her constant bickering was also taking its toll on Kurt. To perfect the trifecta of unhappiness, Kim was also experiencing extreme personal problems in her life.

Back in 1982, Kurt had started working full time in the department store at the Sand Point Naval Base. Five years later he found himself still working there, and only making $5 an hour. In 1987 he finally decided that he'd rather have no money than to continue working there. This period was the beginning of a very difficult period for the Fastbacks, and also marked a particularly low point in Kurt and Kim's lives. Kurt sarcastically recalls that "all the most cheerful songs from Powerful Motor were written during that time."

In June of 1987, with the help of Conrad Uno, Popllama Records released the 11-track Fastbacks LP, "And His Orchestra". The record is jam-packed with great songs from start to finish. There are many spectacular moments on this record, but in particular it marked the first appearance of what is considered by many fans to be the best ever Fastbacks song, "K Street" (few realize that Kurt made a "mistake" during the guitar solo). The official release party was held on June 7th, and it also featured a quick appearance by Richard, but the show was primarily acoustic. After almost 8 years of being a band, the Fastbacks released their first full length LP.

(Note: The Fastbacks' "And His Orchestra" LP would later be released in the UK on the Blaster label in 1989. A few months prior to the LP release, Blaster would also release two singles ("In the Winter" and "Wrong, Wrong, Wrong") under what Bloch calls "tumultuous conditions.")

Nate Johnson

Two more months would pass after the AHO release party before the first official appearance of Nathan "Fisky Boy" Johnson. My words cannot adequately describe Nate, so I will include his own drunken description of himself:

"I was born in Montana two days before JFK was shot. My father is a Lutheran minister and my family background is Norwegian and I've always been pining for the fjords, even though I was never taught the language. I thrive in cold weather and find nothing depressing about being depressed. I grew up with church music, Harry Belafonte, and the Kingston Trio. I played piano for eight years and was really good, but I didn't practice much. I don't remember exactly how I started playing drums, but I remember the records. Elton John's greatest hits and Neil Diamond's "Hot August Night" at the Greek Theatre. My best mate had this kit in the den of his house and we used to go and listen to this stuff. I tried to play it and was really jealous of my friend's older brother who could play the gob out of the song. I also think that "Chicago VIII" had something to do with things. It was a small town. Forgive me. [author's note: I actually love the first seven Chicago albums, especially II!] It's the one with the cardinal on the cover. Terry Kath was still alive. In fifth grade I moved to a town north of Seattle. I hated it from the get-go. I convinced my dad to buy me a cheap kit. A Ludwig. Ancient hardware. I plied my trade listening to Earth, Wind & Fire and early Genesis records. Then some Rush. Progressive rock. I eschewed society, never did anything wrong and payed a lot of attention to baseball. Played drums when no one was around and became brilliant. Held a crush on the same girl for seven years and never talked to her. That's the true secret. I have only played drums to impress women.

When I'm in love, I don't give a shit about anything else. When not...I try and find where I can buy some sticks."

By the way, Johnson is currently in Budapest, playing drums for a band called Fabulon.

Nate was working at a record store in St. Paul, Minneapolis when he first heard about the Fastbacks through a friend who had sent him a tape of "And His Orchestra". Sight unseen, and drummer unheard, he called up Kurt and set up in audition in Seattle. It worked out and Johnson ended up moving to Seattle to play in the Fastbacks.

"I came to join the Fastbacks because I once had a dream about

being a pop-star. I wanted to be famous during my late teens and early twenties. I was working at a used-record store in Minneapolis when a friend of mine from my hometown called me up and said that I would have been perfect for a certain band. The next day I found their first EP in the F-file. I took it home and listened to it while trying very hard to write like and be Charles Bukowski. I ended up moving to Seattle, liked Lulu the first time I met her, and played with them off and on for a few years. I think that I learned everything I have learned of importance in some way or another from Kurt. I miss him a lot. We don't keep in contact. I'm the sort of person who has met many people throughout my life, and then left to go somewhere else. The Fastbacks filled a long period in my life, as far as I am concerned. It was a very valuable part. It was the perfect band for me for a time. And it will always be a perfect band for me at a certain time later. "Fisky Boy"? Kurt called me that. It's his invention. I think it might have something to do with fish and my pretending to be Norwegian."

Nate's first show as Fastbacks drummer #8 took place on August 3, 1987. This was 11 months and 2 days after the last real Fastbacks live show. In another "small world" footnote, this show was at the Mural Amphitheater and featured support act Pure Joy. Pure Joy featured the talents of Rusty Willoughby (guitars & vocals) and later Andy Davenhall (drums), both of whom would assume drumming duties in the Fastbacks years later (Andy quit the Fastbacks before he ever played a show). Moreover, little did anyone realize that Nate would later quit the Fastbacks in order to devote more time to Flop, a post-Pure Joy band fronted by none other than Rusty Willoughby. (In fact, Rusty had never met Nate prior to this show.)

At this point, tension between Bloch and Gargiulo had reached critical mass. Whether it was Lulu's anger at not really being taken seriously, or her lack of focus regarding the band because of her increasingly busy film jobs, she was not a happy camper, and she took out her frustrations on the band. Her position in the Fastbacks finally redefined itself on the night of November 27, 1987 at the Central Tavern. This was only Nate's seventh show with the band, but it would prove to be Lulu's last for two years and seven months to the day.



The story goes that after sound check, Kurt and Nate hung around the bar and had a few too many. When Lulu saw them right before showtime she chastised them for being drunk. During the first few songs, Nate was so drunk that he couldn't keep a steady beat, and Lulu finally blew her top. In the middle of the show she screamed at Kurt and walked off stage, much to the bewilderment of the spectators and the chagrin of the other band members. Kurt, Kim, and Nate finished the set (which ended in Kurt throwing his guitar against a wall and Nate throwing his drums off the stage). The next day Kurt suggested to Kim and Nate that they have a go at being a three piece. They all agreed to tell Lulu the "bad" news as a group. Ultimately, however, the burden of truth fell on Bloch's shoulders, as he had to tell Lulu that she was no longer in the Fastbacks. Lulu remembers "quitting" the band, and no doubt she probably would have had not Kurt forced her hand.

Line-Up circa January 1988:

Kim Warnick Bass and Vocals
Kurt Bloch Guitar
Nate Johnson Drums

The Fastbacks played their first show as a three-piece on January 15, 1988 at the Central Tavern, the same place where they had played their "last" show as a four-piece. They would go on to play one more show as a three-piece before entering Egg Studio to record "demos" that would ultimately end up turning into tracks for "Very, Very Powerful Motor".

Only 15 Fastbacks shows would take place in 1988. The year culminated in a show with Mudhoney on September 23rd at none other than the storied Central Tavern. Other shows of note that year were two shows that were captured and released as "Bike, Toy, Clock, Gift". Initially a cassette-only release on No Threes (and also the No Threes swan song), the performances were taken from a Mural Amphitheater show on August 15th (10 songs), and a show with Pure Joy at the Vogue on September 21st (5.05 songs). The strangest, most incestuous fact about these shows was the union of the Fastbacks and the Posies at the Mural show. Who would've thought that Mike Musburger of the Posies would some day end up being the most prolific and long-lasting of all Fastbacks

drummers, let alone that Kim would ultimately end up marrying (and divorcing) Posies co-frontman, Ken Stringfellow, within the span of the next decade.

Released in 1989, "Bike, Toy, Clock, Gift" features a little over 15 songs (the 16th song is an 8-second version of "Trouble Sleeping"). Amongst the special treats are covers of the Ramones "Swallow My Pride" [ironically, the Fastbacks would later end up covering "Swallow My Pride" by Green River, a totally different song in every respect (and a stroke of brilliance!)], the Buzzcocks' "Love You More," Mott the Hoople's "Roll Away the Stone" and Queen's "Brighton Rock". The Queen cover displays Kurt's lead guitar heroics as he mimics Brian May's epic Echoplex solo note for note, except sans the Echoplex. These covers truly reflect the varied influences of the Fastbacks sound. From the simplicity and irreverence of the Ramones and Buzzcocks, to the histrionics and drama of Queen and Mott the Hoople, the Fastbacks have always incorporated the styles they've appreciated the most. It's part of the brilliance which is the Fastbacks, and that allows them to get away with covering Van Halen's "Atomic Punk", the MC5's "Ramblin' Rose", and Elton John's "Rocket Man". How many bands can get away with that and still retain their sincerity? The highlight of "BTCG", however, is a song entitled "Yesterday the Sun Came Out at Midnight". Although a studio version of the song would never appear, this mid-tempo ballad goes down in my book as one of the most unique songs in Bloch's cannon.

"I can't blame you for thinking there must be some explanation, why I thought sunshine lit up the night. Come with me this time tomorrow. Sit with me under the stars. I'll wait forever to prove I was right"

1989

By all accounts, 1989 was the toughest year for the Fastbacks. I have had a difficult time tracking their shows, assuming there even were any Fastbacks shows played that year. It was in 1989 that Kurt joined the Young Fresh Fellows as their lead guitar player. And it was probably the year that will go down as the lowest point in the history of the band. Kurt's morale and faith in the Fastbacks had all but vanished. Kim was going through some of her toughest ordeals as a person, and Nate had disappeared to work on fishing boats in Alaska. In retrospect, the worst part of their quandary was the fact that over the course of 1988 they had recorded and mostly completed what many Fastbacks fans consider their best album, "Very, Very Powerful Motor". This record would not be released until 1990, when Popllama released it in the US and Blaster Records released it in the UK.

"Very, Very Powerful Motor"

"Powerful Motor" was started in January 1988 as an exercise in recording demos as a three-piece. From the start, it was never intended as a record. The tapes were later deemed good enough on their own to make up the next Fastbacks record. Most of the music for the record was recorded live, with minimal guitar overdubs (the notable exception being the opening track, "In the Summer"). A friend, Dale Weiss, was so impressed by what he heard that he gave Kurt some money to help finish mixing and recording the record. 1988 was also the same time that the Seattle scene exploded onto the national musical radar scope. With the emergence of Sub Pop as the independent label du jour, the Fastbacks were approached by Jonathan Poneman and asked to contribute a song for the "Sub Pop 200" compilation. Aided by producer extraordinaire and skilled engineer Jack Endino, the Fastbacks recorded three songs with money funded by Sub Pop: the aforementioned Green River cover "Swallow My Pride" (which ended up on "Sub Pop 200"), and two other songs, "Says Who?" and "Everything I Don't Need". "Says Who?" would end up on "Powerful Motor", while "Everything I Don't Need" would be released on a 45 and then re-issued on the Sub Pop oddities collection, "The Question Is No" (a different recording of "Everything I Don't Need" can be found on the CD version of "Powerful Motor").

11 tracks strong (12 on the CD), "Very, Very Powerful Motor" is a monument of simplicity/complexity, power, and depth. Each song is special in its own right, with a near perfect sequence from start to finish. From the classical references in "Better Than Before" to the soaring harmonies of "Last Night I Had a Dream That I Could Fly", there are not enough superlatives to describe this record. The best way to find out is to listen to the record, and not sit here wasting time reading about it. Released 10 years after their formation, "Very, Very Powerful Motor" is a phenomenal achievement, and to this day stands up as one of the finest Fastbacks recordings in existence. Their best moments as a band, however, were still on the horizon.

11 tracks strong (12 on the CD), "Very, Very Powerful Motor" is a monument of simplicity/complexity, power, and depth. Each song is special in its own right, with a near perfect sequence from start to finish.

To be continued...

CHECK OUT THE NEXT EXCITING INSTALLMENT IN THE STORY OF THE FASTBACKS IN THE JUNE/JULY ISSUE OF HIT LIST! ⊕

HIT SQUAD

Hello kids,
For a 'zine that spends a substantial chunk of time being as punk as it gets, what could be more punk than the ur-punk rants of Buddy Rich, chewing his band out to hell and high water.

— Johan Kugelberg

(In the bus between sets)

BR- You guys are gonna be back in New York on the bread line so fast you won't even know that you were on this fuckin' band. How dare you play a fuckin' set like that. Since when did the fuckin' trumpet players become the leader of this fuckin' band and decide how long they're gonna hold a chord? What the fuck do you think your doin'? You think you're playin' with some kid up there? I expect one-hundred-and-ten percent fucking perfection every fuckin' tune, you got that? If you can't do it, get off my fuckin' band to-NIGHT! You had a day off yesterday and you come back like this and you suck! What the fuck kind of music do you think you're playing here anyhow? And who do you think you're playing for? You think I'll tolerate that shit? You're worse than any fuckin' high school band I ever heard. You come in wrong because you leave one fuckin' beat out, you can't find one!? I don't know what kind of drummers you think you're playin' with, but you'll play with me or you'll get out! And I mean NOW! I don't need this shit. I have a home in Palm Springs and I can go sit on my ass the rest of my life and not worry about a fuckin' thing...and don't have to meet your fuckin' payroll, and pay you for playin' like a fuckin' high school dropout! How dare you do that! ASSHOLES!! You can't play a simple fuckin' tune; you can't hold a chord; you can't play time when you play solos. What kind of solos am I hearing tonight? (as he turns to the Trombonist) You want to rehearse and practice, get a fuckin' band in Sydney and play the kind of shit you want. Over here you play TIME!!



BR-(screaming) What the fuck do you think is goin' on here? You had too many fuckin' days off and you think this is a game!? You think I'm the only one that's gonna work up there while you motherfuckers sit out there and clam all over this fuckin' joint!? What do you think this is anyhow? What kind of playing do you think this is? What kinda miscues do you call this? What fuckin' band do you think you're playin' on, motherfuckers? You wanna fuck with me on the bandstand?...Shut that fuckin' door! I'm up there working my balls off, trying to do somebody a favor, and you motherfuckers are suckin' all over this joint. What kind of trumpet section do you call this tonight? And saxophones...you've gotta fuckin' be kidding me! How dare you call yourselves professionals. Assholes! You're playin' like fucking children up there. You got your fuc...(distracted momentarily) where the fuck are you? That's marvelous. (turns to the Trombonist) You've got your fuckin' horn so far deep in the fuckin' bell, we don't need to have a band here tonight. You afraid you won't be heard? Everybody can hear your fuckin' clams out there. You don't need a mike for that. You're takin' up too much fuckin' time blowin' what? Shit!! You stand out here all night tryin' to blow your fuckin' brains out... when it comes time to play, what do you play? Clams!! You got nowhere to fuckin' go tonight the next set because if I hear one fuckin' clam from anybody, you've had it! One clam and this whole fuckin' band is through...tonight!! Try me! You got some fuckin' nerve. Nights off, nothin' to do, and you come in and play this kind of shit for me...Fuck all of you!! You're not doin' me any fuckin' favors, you're breakin' my heart up there. I gotta go up there and be embarrassed by you motherfuckers? I've played with the greatest fuckin' musicians in the world. How dare you play like that for me! How dare you try to play like that for me. Assholes!! I get fifteen fuckin' kids in rehearsal. The fuckin' time in this band is incredible! We don't play two fuckin' bars in one fuckin' tempo. Not one! You can't keep fuckin' time and play, there's too many things to do, isn't there? You can't pat your fuckin' foot and play. You're all over the fuckin' place. Miscue after miscue...You try one fuck up the next set, and when you get back to New York you'll need another fuckin' job. Count on it! Now get out of my fuckin' bus! Right now!(Band members shuffle out in a daze)

(In a tour bus traveling to the next gig. Buddy is pacing up and down the aisle of the bus, searching for a victim)

Buddy Rich- Two fuckin' weeks to make up your mind whether you want a beard or you want a job. I'll not have this trouble with this band. This is not the goddamn House of David fuckin' baseball team. This is the Buddy Rich Band; young people...with faces! No more fuckin' beards. That's out! If you decide to do it, you're through. Right now! This is the last time I make this announcement. No more fucking beards. I don't want to see it. If you guys don't want to shave it off. I'll treat you just like they treat you in the fuckin' Marine Corps. This is the way I want my band to look. If you don't like it, get out! You've got two weeks to make up your mind. This is no idle request. I'm telling you how my band is gonna look. You're not telling me how you're gonna look, I'm telling you. You've got two weeks to make up your fucking mind, if you have any mind. There's too much freedom in this band. It's taken away. You're not going to do what you want to do, but what I want to do, as long as you're takin' my fuckin' money. I'm presenting my kind of band. The image I present is what I want, not what you want *(turns to Dave Peneke, one of the trombonists)*. You seem to be giving me more trouble than anybody else. Do you want to do something about it? It's up to you. Do you want to do something about it?

Trombonist-*(in an Australian accent)* I would definitely not suggest you touch me.

BR- Then I definitely tell you one thing. You keep your fuckin' mouth shut, get the fuckin' beard off, or get off the band, right now. Now what do you think about that? Now that's a definite

suggestion. When you go to work tonight, if I catch the fuckin' beard on you, I'll throw you off the fuckin' bandstand, O.K.?

Trombonist- I'm not taking it off.

BR- You're what?

Trombonist- I'm not taking it off.

BR- You're through.

Trombonist- O.K.

BR- Right now. You don't tell me what to do, I tell you. You don't like it, get off.

Trombonist- When and where?

BR- Get off! Get your fuckin' clothes and get off! Right now! (to the bus driver) Pull the fuckin' bus over!

Trombonist- Have you got two weeks pay for me?

BR- Have I got what?

Trombonist- Two weeks pay for me.

BR- I got nothin' for you. I got a right hand to your fuckin' brain if you want it. I'll give you two weeks...two weeks for what? You learn the rules of my band. You don't like it, that's it. You get off. And try to take me to the fuckin' union. I'd love it. I'd love it. You get no two weeks pay, you get two weeks time. Get off. (aside) He was waiting for this for a long fuckin' time.

Trombonist- No I haven't.

BR- Yes you have...

Trombonist- No I haven't at all.

BR-*(continuing)* ...ever since you opened your fuckin' mouth because I don't like the way you write...(pausing), and I still play your fuckin' charts, for you. You understand that...not for me.

Trombonist- I think you play my charts becau...

BR- Because what?

Trombonist- ...because, in particular, "Manhattan" is the best chart in the book.

BR- It is?

Trombonist- Yes.

BR- Then take "Manhattan" and get off. I'm a success without you and without your writing.

Trombonist- I know that. I know that.

BR- Alright. So don't tell me what the best chart in my book is.

Trombonist- Well, it certainly goes over the best.

BR- Goes over the best?

Trombonist- Sure it does. People appreciate...

BR-(interrupting) Go back to Sydney and, uh, whatever you do over there, good luck. Not over here. You're through. (to others in the area) I want him off my fuckin' bus right now.

Trombonist- It's a pleasure to be off.

BR- Keep talkin'...keep talkin'.(Buddy's voice begins to tremble with rage) You wanna, you wanna start some shit with me? Hmm? Keep talkin'...

Trombonist- Not particularly.

BR- Then keep your fuckin' mouth shut! Right now! Or I'll close it for you. Keep it shut...or try me!

Trombonist- I don't need to try you, Buddy.

BR- Then shut up!

Trombonist- Well, I'd just appreciate, you know, being talked to like a human being.

BR- I try to talk to you like a human being and you talk back all the time...

Trombonist- I don't think you do.

BR- ...now keep your fuckin' mouth shut or I'll show you what it's like! That's all!

Trombonist- O.K., but you have no right to threaten me.

BR- I'm not threatening you, I'm telling you. You don't want to do what I want in my band. I'm telling you!

Trombonist- O.K.

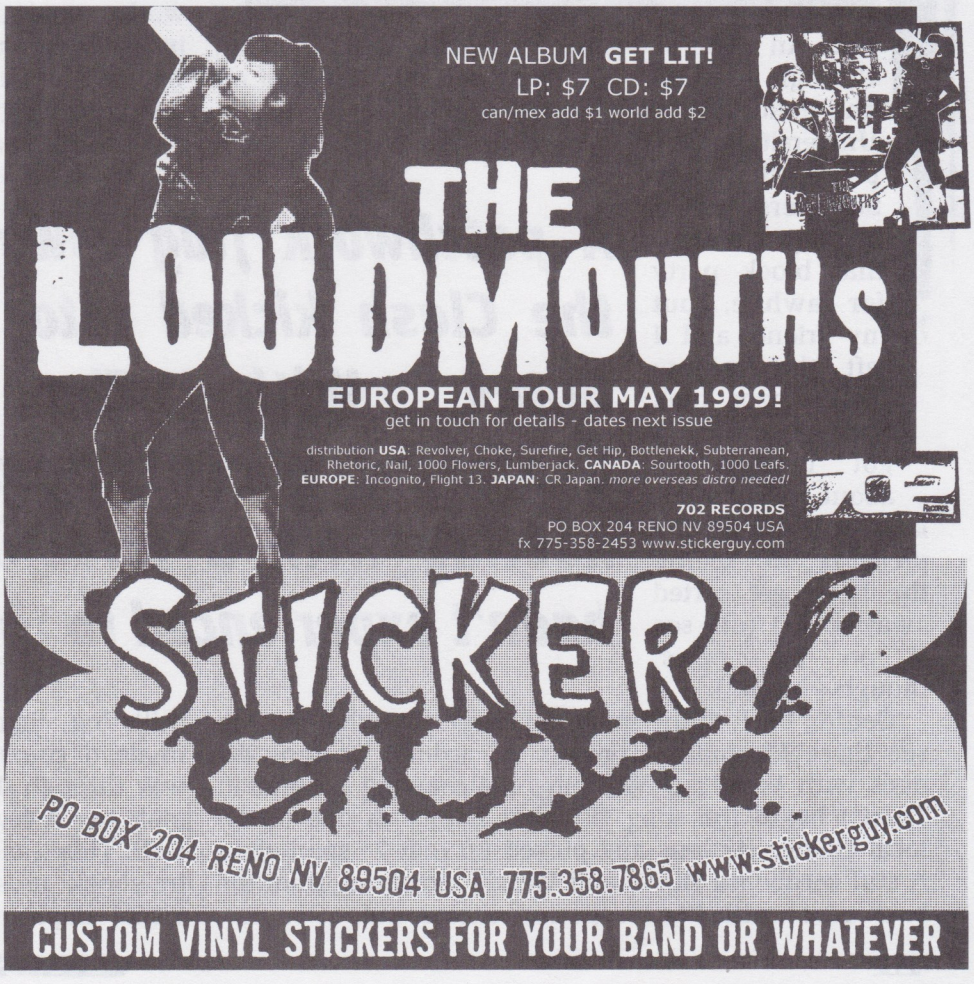
BR- Then shut up!

Trombonist- I will.

BR- Alright.*(turns to the rest of the band)* Let's get that understood by everybody. I want him off. I don't want him on the bandstand tonight. Two bones...(Buddy resumes cruising the aisle, looking for other targets of opportunity) I'm warning you for the last time. You wanna...right now...anytime you're ready...Close your fuckin' eyes. I've done had it with you. Sit down and keep your fuckin' eyes and your mouth to yourself. Grow up. You're not a tough guy so why don't you just sit down. You better start learning to act like one. *(Eyes the trombonist)* I am one, you are not. So shut up!

Trombonist- Don't threaten me.

BR- Fuckin' asshole, fuckin' with me. I've got one for you. I own this fuckin' band. *(Stage darkens while Buddy contemplates his power)*



HIT SQUAD

While thinking about what to write for my second Hit List column, I just came to the realization that it's been 20 years since I saw my first real shows. That would be the Plasmatics at the Rat in Boston and the Clash at the old Harvard Square Theater in Cambridge. It's amazing that I can recall minute details of those gigs some 20 years after the fact, whereas I have a difficult time remembering bands I saw 6 months or a year ago. Selective memory? Perhaps. But they were, as the cliché goes, turning points in this writer's musical education.

I'd gone to the infamous Rat one time before that, with a friend of mine, to see a wretched bar rock band called the Stompers. Let's not count that one. An aside about the Stompers, though—going through a scrapbook, I came across a photo of an anti-police brutality protest I attended at Boston University, after 50 people got arrested at a block party that the Stompers were playing. I was at that block party for awhile, but my friend and I left the minute those bozos took the stage and it got broken up about a half hour later, so I missed the pleasure of seeing the band get carted away to jail (did see it on the news, though—ha ha!).



Getting back to the matter at hand, though, I start to see these Plasmatics' posters all around Boston, the ones with Wendy O Williams chainsawing the guitar. Then I heard the song "Butcher Baby" on one of the local college stations and picked up that 7" soon after. A stiff cardboard sleeve and Wendy glowering from the back cover with her weapon of choice and, of course, the sound of the tool on the record itself, pressed on clear red vinyl. Got to check this shit out live, I decided. So I trudged the three blocks from my BU dorm, through a snowstorm (no lie!) to the cavernous environs of the renowned Kenmore Square shithole. No one in the dorm was brave enough to accompany me. This was a time when being a college student and being into punk rock weren't synonymous, at least in Boston. It was also at least a good year or so before the Plasmatics established themselves as a national name.

Anyway, the crowd was seedy and degenerate looking, more the type of folk you'd see at a peep show or nudie joint than a punk club, or at least that was the impression. The Plasmatics were preceded by the Molls, an early Boston new wave/punk band whose distinguishing points were that they had a combination pianist/electric bassoon player and their drummer was future Mission of Burma guy Peter Prescott. Their 7", "White Stains," is kind of a lost Beantown classic, by the way. After the Molls played to a largely indifferent response, the video monitors in the club started showing short conceptual videos by the Plasmatics. Even before the world had gotten MTV-ified, the Plasmatics were putting as much into the visual aspect as their music. Maybe more, as those early songs were pretty primitive-sounding. The clips were for "Fast Food Service," with the band dressed like depraved fast food workers and, then, "Concrete Shoes," which, if I recall, interposed cement being poured over feet in a bucket with Wendy, uh, touching herself. That video ends and this obscenely loud sound comes from the stage. There are the Plasmatics, blasting out their three chords of hell, while Wendy gyrates rather pruriently. She's wearing a bloodstained t-shirt and see through black panties. I recall the drummer wearing a butcher's smock. Richie Stotts, the guitarist, might have been sporting nurse's get-up but that memory is a little spotty. But I remember the groping hands in front of the stage and Wendy titillating, then backing off. "Butcher Baby" was the finale, of course, and Ms. Williams did, indeed, saw her way through the guitar. What an obscene racket and it took her a few minutes to get through the thing, as well. This was quite a spectacle. A combination of electro-shock musical primitivism and an unforgettable visual impact. The Plasmatics, of course, eventually

A patchwork flag lowered and the Clash kicked into "I'm So Bored With The USA." Deafening, pulverizing and connecting with a forcefulness I hadn't experienced to that point

pushed the envelope further, with exploding cars and all that, but this was still quite heady shit for an 18 year old college freshman. Invitingly perverse.

The Clash didn't rely on such gimmickry when they played a few weeks after that. It was their first area appearance, long sold out, and the punk rockers were out in force. Probably the most impressive collection of leather jackets ever seen in Boston to that point. While the opening band, the rather mediocre local garage band the Rentals, got booed off the stage, the second act received a much better response. Ladies and gentleman, Bo Diddley! Square guitar and all, chugging out that "shave and a haircut—two bits" R&B shuffle with nothin'-to-it skillfulness. This middle-aged black gentleman had these surly die-hard punks eating out his proverbial hand, even getting asked back for an encore.

After a brief intermission, the strains of "There's A Riot Going On" piped over the PA, a patchwork flag lowered and the Clash kicked into "I'm So Bored With The USA." Deafening, pulverizing and connecting with a forcefulness I hadn't experienced to that point. This was quite different from those covers bands I saw play at the Twin Rinks in Danvers the previous summer, and it was even quite a contrast with playing those Clash records in my room. For the first time, I truly felt the power and liberating properties of full-volume rock music. The review in the Boston Globe critiqued Paul Simonon's weakness as a bass player and the fact that they played too loud...typical of the mainstream rock writers who still don't know what to make of aggressive music in this city—but that's another matter altogether.

Yeah, I have to turn down the radio or TV when I answer the phone, I often have people repeat what they say to me, and I can't hear shit if there's any background noise. It's been worth it, though.

That was the baptism, the rite of passage, the start of my aural deterioration. Yeah, I have to turn down the radio or TV when I answer the phone, I often have people repeat what they say to me, and I can't hear shit if there's any background noise. It's been worth it, though. I wouldn't have given up those live musical experiences for anything. There are probably bands that have blown me away even more than the Clash—off the top of my head, the times I saw Black Flag, Minor Threat, Negative Approach and Crucifix had a similar impact. Everyone reading this column can probably recall the time they had their "conversion experience," where you knew that there were few things better in the world than having your senses overwhelmed and enraptured with the omnipotence, the command of a single-minded volume assault.

That's why you're reading this magazine...am I correct?

⊕⊕⊕⊕

Last issue, I wrote about some of my favorite pre-punk rock albums. This time, I'm going to delve into some early- to mid-80s metal favorites. Not the awful hair-metal bands, although I have to admit that Twisted Sister were an obscene, hysterically funny live band around 1983. There was still a smidgen of underground tawdriness to them at that point, before they became the favorites of the teenage MTV crowd and their live show went from R-rated to PG, in terms of Dee Snider's outrageous banter.

In late 1980, I discovered the joys of Motörhead. I saw a video clip for "The Chase Is Better Than The Catch," from their "Ace Of Spades" album. This was an obscene racket, even for the mid-tempo "Chase." And the bloke playing the Rickenbacker bass and sporting the huge mustache and sideburns and moles not only had one of the dirtiest-sounding voices I'd ever heard, but was ugly as fuck. Getting the album opened me up to this band's raw viscera. Blisteringly fast and rough, meaner-sounding than most of what you'd consider metal at that point. I've been an unabashed devotee of the band ever since. "Overkill" and "Bomber" are certainly strong albums, but "Ace Of Spades" remains my favorite by the band, from the molten speed buzz of the title track and "The Hammer" to the pummelling boogie of "Fast and Loose" and "Jailbait."

Judas Priest were putting out some strong longplayers at that point and were a striking live band, to boot. "British Steel," also from 1980, continues to be a favorite and that was their best tour, with opening acts the Scorpions and Def Leppard lighting up the Orpheum Theater in Boston. That's also one of the best shows I've ever seen, period! Def Lep were still teenagers and this was pre-"Photograph," so the sound was more boogie-driven. The Scorps hadn't limped away to pop-metal land, either. Screeching furies on the likes of "Just Another Piece Of Meat" and other killers from their "Lovedrive" album. The Priest's "British Steel" is a tour-de-force of catchy songs and bonecrushing power, with "Living After Midnight" and "Breaking The Law" remaining the best-known songs, but don't overlook the thundering rampage of "Steeler" or the crunching

precision of "Grinder." It was also humorous to be sitting in an audience full of people you suspected were quite homophobic, being entertained by the more-than-obviously gay Rob Halford. He just came out in the last few years, but you'd have to be pretty dim not to have an inkling of it even then. Oh yeah, this is a metal audience we're talking about.

So Motörhead laid the groundwork for speed and roughness in metal and so did a lot of the "New Wave Of British Heavy Metal Bands," some of which I discovered later on. One of the first American bands to codify that influence was Metallica. Long before they became mainstream rock darlings, they put out some ass-kicking music. "Kill 'Em All" still stands up and "Ride The Lightning" isn't far behind. Christ they were young—James Hetfield hadn't even lost his adolescent facial zits yet. A lack of pretense and bombast...it was hungry-sounding and aggressive music and that's the face they put forth when they played in front of about 200 people at the Channel in early '84. Megadeth's first album, "Killing Is My Business," was also a spirited pleasure. Dave Mustaine had been cast off from Metallica and made the most of it on this speed metal treat.

Slayer's "Reign In Blood" is the greatest thrash metal album of all time. No argument. 28 minutes of ravaging perfection.

A couple more and I'm done...Slayer's "Reign In Blood" is the greatest thrash metal album of all time. No argument. 28 minutes of ravaging perfection, from the opening chords of the Auschwitz-themed "Angel Of Death" (they had some rather sinister lyrical matter) to the scalding speed bomb "Necrophobic" (with its unforgettable refrain of "Ripping apart... severing flesh... gouging eyes... tearing limb from limb!") to the murderous stomp of "Criminally Insane" to the penultimate ominousness of "Raining Blood," punctuated by the sound of thunder claps leading into a hell-driven sonic tirade. Tom Araya conveys the malevolence with teeth-clenched rage, Jeff Hanneman and Kerry King dish out the rapier powerchords and whammy-bar howlings, and Dave Lombardo holds it all together with magnificent double-speed drumming—playing the 4/4 at inhuman velocity without resorting to blastbeats or double-pedal excess. Fierce, merciless stuff, and no speed metal album has come within a mile of it since. Their other efforts are also noteworthy. The embryonic thrash of "Show No Mercy" and the "Haunting The Chapel" EP and "R.I.B."s follow-ups, "South Of Heaven" and "Seasons In The Abyss," were certainly far from shit, but this is the pinnacle.

Celtic Frost were also a distinctive metal band. Formed from the ashes of Swiss thrash primitivists Hellhammer, vocalist/guitarist Tom G. Warrior (Tom Fischer) punctuated his gutteral vocals with lots of "oofs" and "heys" and the band's power metal barrage was hard-hitting and lethal. "Morbid Tales" remains a crowning achievement. Basic purveyors of speed, with the likes of "Into Crypts Of Rays," "Nocturnal Fear" and "Dethroned Emporer," but also slowing it down to a doomier trot for "Visions Of Mortality," "Procreation Of The Wicked" and "Return To The Eve." On the EP "Tragic Seranades," there's a remixed version of "Eve," with extra "oofs" and a "hey-hey-hey" that would do Fat Albert proud. A progression occurred on "To Mega Therion," introducing ominous sounding kettle drums and horns for the instrumental "Innocence and Wrath" and female operatic vocals, although the basic formula of pulverizing metal remained. In fact, this LP is right up there with "Tales." Blazing power was exhibited on the likes of "Jewel Throne" and "Fainted Eyes," while the band delved into darker regions for "Necromantical Screams." The cover art is by H.R. Giger, incidentally. Celtic Frost album covers could be quite colorful and you really need to see them in the LP form to appreciate them. That's a lost element in the CD era, for sure.

They REALLY started to get strange with "Into The Pandemonium" (packaged in a gorgeous gatefold LP sleeve, once again), with more of Warrior's self-described "avant-garde" elements. Tom deviated from his caveman vocal gargle into a whiny melancholia on some songs. "One In Their Pride" is a sample-happy sound collage similar to Paul Hardcastle's "19," while "I Won't Dance" is an odd heavy metal dance song, with soulful female vocals and "Mesmerized" takes a melodic turn. Sometimes it was a bit far-reaching, as on the pretentious faux-opera "Rex Irae," but the cover of Wall Of Voodoo's "Mexican Radio" works surprisingly well. The last semi-triumph for the band, as Warrior (or Thomas Gabriel, as he was calling himself at that point) recruited a new Frost and went off in an inexplicable glam direction for "Cold Lake." A definite miscalculation, and the attempt to return to the terrain between glam and power metal for "Vanity/Nemesis" wasn't much better. Those early Frost records are a keeper, though.

This is the point where I tell you that I do a zine called *Suburban Voice* and if you want ordering info or to contact me for any other reason, you may do so at PO Box 2746, Lynn, MA 01903 or alellen@shore.net... ⊕

HIT SQUAD

1. Position of a punk, pushing 40, on a plane nearly 32,000 ft over the pole, channel-surfing Northwest Airlines' in-flight music programming.

So Jeff asked me to write for his mag last week. A copy came in the mail yesterday and I read it this morning in the airport. It kind of looks like *Maximum Rock 'n' Roll [Ed — Ouch, that hurts!]*, which I used to write for over 15 years ago.

VIC BONDI

I haven't read a punk rag in years. I browsed Maximum for some article on Yohannan after he died, but that was it. I stopped writing for *Maximum* in 1984; since then, I've edited four books, designed four CD-ROMs, written a dissertation, assorted articles, a few short stories, two websites, eight albums, and two novels. But I've never again written anything for a punk rag.

Because I don't give a shit about punk rock.

It's true. On my lame-ass CD player these days are Leonard Bernstein, Riuyichi Sakamoto, Billy Bragg and Wilco, Beck, Neil Young, DJ Shadow, and the Throwing Muses. I do love the new Murder City Devils record, but most of you probably hate them. There's not a single scratchy, distorted, recorded-in-the-basement cassette blast of rage that I'm listening to. Mostly, that's because I haven't heard anything in five years that didn't rehash 1977, 1981, or—worst still—1985. You can't really expect me to listen to punk after Green Day, or after enduring bleating, pious, trust-fund punks busy insisting that meat is murder without managing to strangle a single original lick out of their guitars. If, in 1981, Biafra or Mould or HR had the same mentality of punks today, we would have all ended up playing rockabilly and preaching about cows. Face it, punk today sucks. Really.

There's not a single scratchy, distorted, recorded-in-the-basement cassette blast of rage that I'm listening to.

So why do I bother booting up my arthritic laptop and writing an article for a punk scene I don't care about? Because I'm moving at 520 mph, reading Benjamin's "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", on my way to a press conference in Japan. Because the Bering Sea is frozen over and gleaming white, and I've had three whiskeys and no sleep and am surfing Northwest Airlines' in-flight music programming: bizarre Southeast Asian caterwauling; establishment classical; horrific MOR mush—and Black Sabbath.

I'm sitting here, surrounded by god-awful tassel-loafer-wearing golfers, by stockbrokers, shoe-salesmen from Taiwan, Thai sweatshop owners, surly stewards, pruned old-money matrons; the very picture of decadent, bloated corruption, and suddenly, over the headphones comes "Paranoid". And the Velvet Underground and Mott the Hoople and "Space Truckin'" by Deep Purple. I'm stunned. And, as corpulent and comfortable as I am, I can't get over how good the shit sounds.

2. Why Benjamin took an overdose of morphine in 1940 within feet of the Spanish border and freedom.

Walter Benjamin believed that every work of art was invested with what he called an "aura", by which he meant the immediacy of the moment of creation, "its unique existence at the place where it happens to be." He believed that art originated in the sacred and the magical, in the attempt by hunters to paint their prey on walls and gain power over them. Every subsequent artistic creation has some sacerdotal function, be it a Mass for choir or an existentialist novel celebrating a passing moment. Every work of art is pregnant with an inherent, historically based meaning. For Benjamin, capitalism and mechanical reproduction inevitably purge the aura from objects of art, stripping them of their context, leaving them empty of meaning. It's an idea he borrowed from Marx, implying that the thinner the meaning of commoditized art, the more we need to buy more and more of it to sate our need for meaning. Marx explained this process as the basis of commodity fetish, whereas Benjamin, sixty years later, interpreted it in light of the events of his time. Because people cannot live without meaning, without the aura of authenticity, they attempt to invest their politics with an existential vitality, a sense of the sacred, and in their zeal wage wars and execute genocides. This was, to Benjamin, one of the keys to understanding fascism, which drove him out of his native Germany and to suicide in 1940. His moment is pregnant with meaning for us: "self-alienation has reached such a

degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order."

3. Where the Fleetwood Mac fan who used to crash our shows ended up.

This in-flight music program has a DJ. It is a woman's voice, with the type of cadence I remember from back in the day. She sounds like the type of record company people who crashed thrash shows, dressed in berets and spandex, and tried to pass for cool by dropping Elvis Costello's name. And she says—I'm not kidding—something like:

"Sex and booze (not drugs) and rock 'n' roll! That's the prescription for a good time! The MAN calls it 'heavy metal' and puts it down as violent and noisy and destructive. But we know a good time when we hear it! So let's get a-rockin' out with some FOOT-STOMPIN' loud in-flight OLDIES!"

Believe me, such crap is a hard thing to keep down after three bourbons. I think that the rest of the passengers in my cabin can't be listening to this, a good bet, as somnolent, they doze through the latest Robin Williams film on their Personal Video Players. But the heavy metal channel is for them, not for me: the DJ actually explains who the Velvet Underground was, with a fake laugh in her voice as she described them as "this New York band had, *ah,* shall we say, an interesting cast of characters." Whoever put the tape together assumed that no one on Northwest flights would know these bands, and assumed, moreover, that heavy metal and punk are merely edgy, slightly dangerous forms of that good ol' good time rockin' roll, which you can listen to in the safety of your cabin as you zoom across the Pacific. The Hard Rock Cafe approach to music. The people that made this tape and my fellow passengers sure as hell don't have a handle on that heavy metal aura. No way they'd know what it was to be 15 and listening to AC/DC in Joe's trailer, when listening to heavy metal was a sure symptom that you were headed to nowhere and your parents were shocked by it, and you were damn sure that none of us would make it out of Pensacola without joining the army or digging pools or cleaning shitloads of grease traps at Dairy Queen. And we'd probably be dead by 30.

The MAN calls it 'heavy metal' and puts it down as violent and noisy and destructive. But we know a good time when we hear it! So let's get a-rockin' out with some FOOT-STOMPIN' loud in-flight OLDIES!"

And some of us were.

4. The aura of Japanese TV.

Later, when I'm jet-lagged and up at four in the morning watching Japanese TV in my hotel room, I stumble across a perfect illustration of Benjamin's concept of aura. In Japan and in some European countries, four a.m. programming takes the form of shots of mountains, or deserts, or oceans. They just set up a camera and shoot, and broadcast music over the shot. It's as though they know no one is watching, but feel compelled to broadcast something anyway. That morning in Japan, I was channel-surfing and caught a shot they were taking from a train traveling in eastern Japan. It was just a view from the window, like you would have riding in the train. And when I've ridden the train in Japan, I've loved it. I can't take my eyes off the landscape, so new and strange. But on TV, it's boring. I'm bored stiff two minutes into it. It's missing everything important, both the context and the moment. Travel has an aura; television doesn't.

Punk had an aura once, too.

5. Why you should not, under any circumstances, be in a punk band.

Being an old fart and having some memory of the circumstance and original moment of American hardcore, I'm perfectly within my rights to piss all over punk today. That is, I simply don't see the point in it. In its original moment punk was definitely about destruction, about goring any number of sacred cows: the brain-dead authoritarian governments that reasserted control over the West; the vapid, narcissistic hippies and their soft-rock coherts; culture gone from bad to worse; shitty stinking cities and lousy education. And know-it-all old farts who'd give you the bum's rush with some lame story about how they were at Woodstock and knew what rock n' roll was really all about.

Well, they did. All I ever wanted to do was destroy what they liked. Because what they liked was symptomatic of a bigger process that was turning the world into a mall and all of us into crap-gobbling trolls. And every bit of it was a diversion from the violence and murder and sheer blind hate that got us here. Ask Jeff about the systematic corruption at the base of our venerated institutions—he's got a good feel for it, and I do, too, espe-

cially being smack in the middle of it.

I won't lie to you: when I was a punk, I was angry because almost nothing in my culture and life seemed *legitimate* in any moral sense. But the fact of the matter is that legitimacy doesn't matter, or authenticity, or art. Power matters. And the majority of this world will compromise with power and sacrifice legitimacy, and those that don't narrow their lives and taste down to ascetic points and nine times out of ten end up bitter for the sacrifice. Because they were dishonest with themselves and always expected to get something in return for their loss.

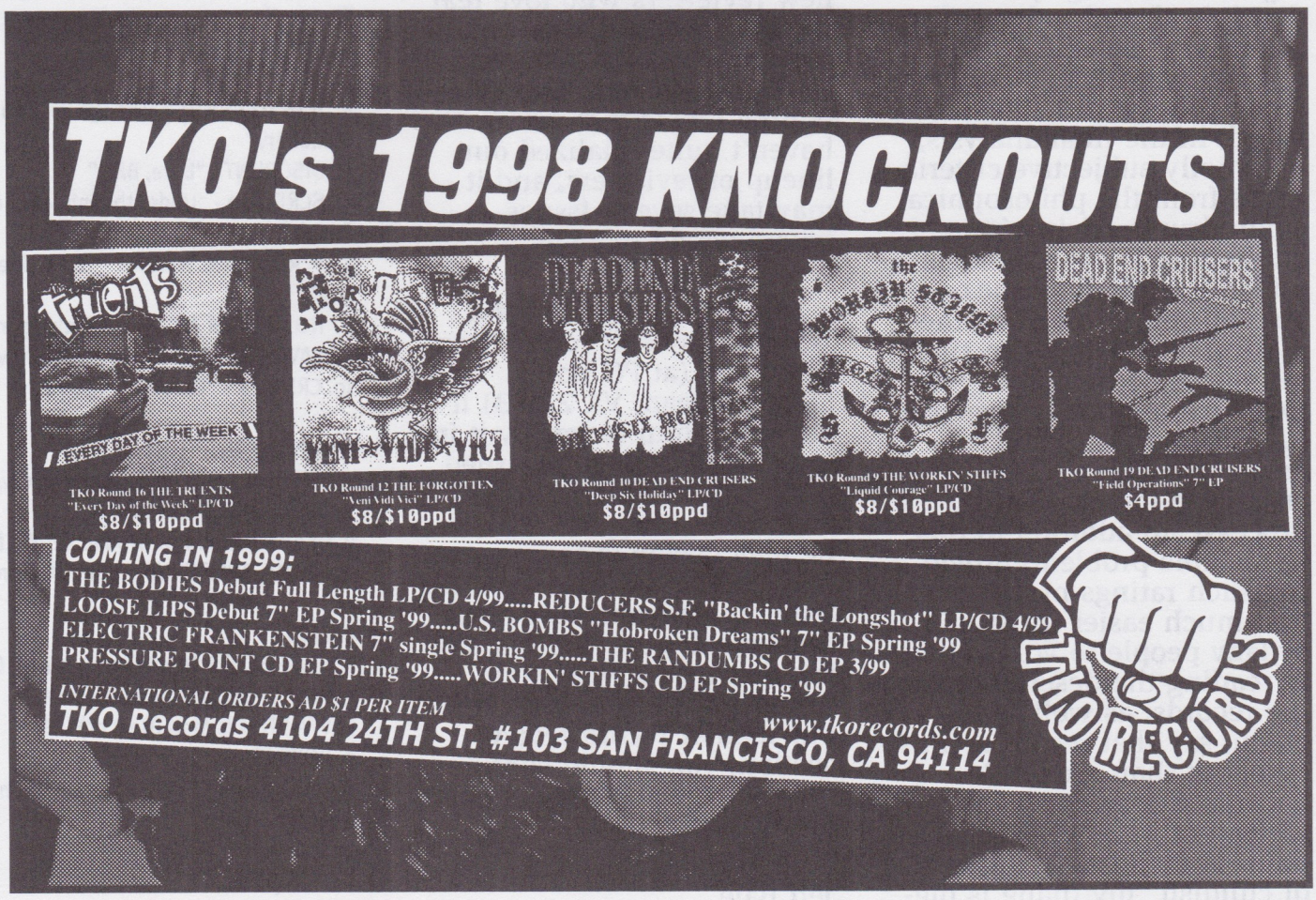
I won't lie to you: when I was a punk, I was angry because almost nothing in my culture and life seemed legitimate in any moral sense. But the fact of the matter is that legitimacy doesn't matter, or authenticity, or art. Power matters.

The bad guys have won, motherfuckers. And they are so unremittingly evil that they are busy trying to buy Dead Kennedy's songs and turn them into commercials. And they've turned Black Sabbath into in-flight programming.

If you are really punk—*really* punk, in the original sense of the term—you would hate punk rock and not produce anything sounding remotely like it. You would be dedicated to its annihilation.

Those of you 17 and dropping MP3s onto the web, or blowing twisted, drug-addled heavy metal jazz have my respect. Those of you in studs and spiky hair are pathetic, and you will make grotesque compromises in you life very soon that will make a mockery of everything you state so definitively now.

Watching you is a pleasure of the first order, absolutely. ⊕



SHIT LIST

In this issue we have decided to abandon, once and for all, the numerical rating system for records. Many years ago, when Tim and I were first planning to launch *MRR,* we debated both the merits and demerits of instituting such a rating system. In the end we decided that the few potential benefits of doing so were far outweighed by the problems involved in using numerical ratings, and wisely scrapped the entire idea. Perhaps it's a sign of increasing senility, but for some reason I temporarily lost sight of all the negative ramifications of rating records, although I've now come to my senses. The basic problem with employing such a rating system is that it is absurd to be giving ostenisbly "objective" numerical evaluations to records when those evaluations are based, in the final analysis, on wholly subjective criteria. Aside from the philosophical conundrums arising from attempting to evaluate that which is entirely unmeasurable on some sort of mathematical basis, how can such ratings be comparable given that each and every reviewer has distinct tastes and employs different subjective criteria in the evaluation process? In addition to this intractable problem, providing such ratings makes it that much easier for stupid or lazy people to void actually reading the descriptions of the records, as well as to claim, say that record A must be better than record B because it received a "5" instead of a "3". What is the point of facilitating this sort of childish "my thang is bigger than your thang" approach? Finally, it's a whole lot easier for our graphic designer to lay out the reviews without having to add the numerical ratings.

Note also that our lineup of record reviewers has undergone some change. Chuch Pettry has unfortunately left us and moved to New York City, and our prospective "rockabilly" reviewers—Barrie Hellbilly and Nick 13—have again failed to turn in any reviews. As yet we haven't decided whether to look for substitutes so as to be able to provide serious coverage of rockabilly and psychobilly releases. On the other hand we are pleased to welcome to new reviewers who love real rock 'n' roll trash and only real rock 'n' roll trash: Jeff Dahl and Ross Fischer. The bottom line is that we haven't quite finalized our lineup of reviewers, and it may take several issues before we do so.

Finally, feel free to send "loud, noisy shit" directly to Tesco Vee (at PO Box 5542/McLean, VA 22103) if you want him to review it in his column. (Be forewarned that he's very picky, and if he doesn't like your record he may decide to tear you a new asshole in print, or more likely to use your disc as a frisbee.) It goes without saying that if you want your releases to be reviewed in our regular record review section, you should continue to send them directly to *Hit List's* address.

Jeff Bale

Brett's Top Ten
1. FASTBACKS live show
2. ALL- Greatest Hits
3. BODIES - New s/t full length
4. ACTION SWINGERS
5. Anticipating new ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN LP
6. SAVES THE DAY - "Can't Slow Down"
7. TOILET BOYS - "Livin' Like A Millionaire"
8. MASHALL ARTIST - "Your Kung-Fu Is Pretty Good"
9. GAZA STRIPPERS- "Laced Candy"
10. V/A - Blasting Room Comp

Jeff Dahl's Top Ten
1. THE BELLRAYS - "Let It Blast"
2. Texas Terri & The Stiff Ones - "Eat Shit"
3. THE WEAKLINGS - any Single or CD
4. THE BULEMICS - Any Single or CD
5. FREDDY LYNXX & THE JETBOYS - "Larger Than Life" CD re-issue
6. DENIZ TEK - "Equinox" CD
7. THE JACOBITES - "God Save Us" LP
8. DEMOLITION 23 - S/T
9. SONIC THRILLS - cassette Demo
10. STEPSISTER - "Big Bad World" 7"

Dave's Top Ten
1. JAWBREAKER - "24 Hour Revenge Therapy"
2. AVAIL - "Over The James"
3. ALL - "ALL"
4. JETS TO BRAZIL - "Orange Rhyming Dictionary"
5. DISCOUNT - "Love, Billy"
6. SCREW 32 - "Under the Influence of Bad People"
7. SCREECHING WEASEL - "Bark Like a Dog"
8. NO USE FOR A NAME - "Making Friends"
9. SAVES THE DAY - "Can't Slow Down"
10. CRINGER - "Greatest Hits, Vol. 1"

Greg's Top Ten
1. INTIMATE FAGS "Break the Back" 45
2. BRIDES "Bad Attitude" 45
3. GEARS "Rockin' at Ground Zero" CD
4. ? & THE MYSTERIANS "Sally Go Around" 45
5. KIDS LP
6. SEX PISTOLS "Pirates of Destiny" CD
7. V/A "Ya Gotta Have Moxie" 2XCD
8. V/A "This is Mod (Best of)" CD
9. BOYS LP
10. LOLI & THE CHONES "Total Fuckin' Genocide" LP

Ian's Top Ten
TOP 5 OF ALL TIME

1. SOCIAL UNREST - "Rat In A Maze" LP
2. SWINGIN' UTTERS - "Streets Of S.F." LP
3. SOCIAL DISTORTION - "Mommy's Little Monster" LP
4. CODE OF HONOR/SICK PLEASURE split 12"
5. BRUISERS - "Anything You Want It's All Right Here" CD

TOP 5 RECENT

1. BELTONES - "On Deaf Ears" CD
2. TEMPLARS - "Omne Datum Optimum" CD
3. DROPKICK MURPHYS - "The Gang's All Here" CD
4. THE TROUBLE - "Nobody Laughs Anymore" CD
5. GEARS - "Rockin At Ground Zero" LP (repress)

Jami's Top Ten

1. DAMNED - "Damned, Damned, Damned" LP
2. PROBLEMATICS - "The Kids All Suck" LP
3. BRIDES - "Bad Attitude" 7"
4. PAGANS - " Everybody Hates You" CD
5. FLAMIN' GROOVIES - "In Teenage Head" LP
6. TEMPLARS - "Omne Datum Optimum" CD
7. DICTATORS - "Who Will Save Rock-n-Roll?" 7"
8. ANGRY SAMOANS - "Back From Samoa" LP
9. TESTORS (Featuring Sonny Vincent) - "Original Punk Recordings" 10"
10. REDUCERS SF - "Don't Like You" 7"/live at Purple Onion

Jeff's Top Ten

ACTION SWINGERS - "Heavy Medication" EP
ASSMEN - "Enema Nation" CD
BEES/PRIMITIVE ROLLERS - split EP
DICTATORS - "Who Will Save Rock 'n' Roll?" 45
LOLI & THE CHONES - "Total Fucking Genocide" LP
LOWER CLASS BRATS - "Rather Be Hated Than Ignored" CD
SIR WINSTON & THE COMMONS - "We're Gonna Love" EP
STISISM - "Coping with Society" CD
SUICIDE KINGS - "Teenage Disaster" CD
V/A - "Roots of Power Pop" CD

Jimi's Top Ten

B.G.K. - "A Dutch Feast" - CD
Dictators - "Who'll save Rock and Roll" 7"
INTREPID A.A.F. - Demo tape
BLACK CAT MUSIC - Live
AMERICAN STEEL - Live
VODKA COLLINS - "Tokyo New York" - CD
IGGY POP
ELECTRIC SUMMER - Live
THE FARTZ - "Because this Fuckin World Still Sucks" - CD
THE LILLINGTONS - "Death By Television" - Cd

Ramsey's Top Ten

1. HIPPOS - Forget The World
2. JINGO DE LUNCH - Perpetuum Mobile
3. RHYTHM ACTIVISM - Jesus Was Gay
4. V/A - Return Of The Red Menaces
5. DOA - Festival Of Athiests
6. DOC HOPPER - Ask Your Mom
7. WYNONA RIDERS - How To Make An American Quit
8. V/A - Four On The Floor
9. ALL - Greatest Hits
10. CRISIS - We Are All Jews And Germans

Your hosts for the next 26.67 pages: Jeff Bale (JB); Kitty Bartholemew (KB); Jimi Cheetah (JC); Jeff Dahl (JD); Ross Fischer (RF); Dave Johnson (DGJ); Ramsey Kanaan (RK); Greg Lowery (GL); Brett Mathews (BAM); Jade Puget (JP); Ian Randumb (IR); Jami Wolf (JW)



SHITLIST

17 YEARS
"5 Million Dollars" CD



Simple, forgettable pop punk hooey. Male/female alternating lead vocals bring out the only thing about this band that might even qualify as a dynamic. I mean, what the fuck can you say about a band that plugs itself into such a dull, lifeless genre? (RF)

(FAROUT/PO BOX 14361/FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33302)

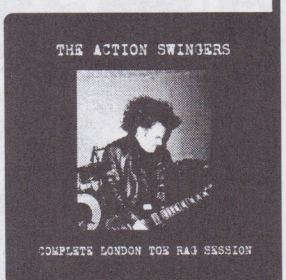
88 FINGERS LOUIE
"Back On The Streets" CD



So, they reformed and are back with more of that by-now-patented "Fat" sound. Somewhat disappointing, in that their early records were fine examples of the genre, and this doesn't push the envelope any further. But all the kids that love STRUNG OUT/NO USE FOR A NAME/LAGWAGON et al, will undoubtedly lap this up. One can't really go wrong with a faithful BAD BRAINS cover, either. (RK)

(HOPELESS/PO BOX 7495/VAN NUYS, CA 91409)

ACTION SWINGERS
"Complete London Toe Rag Sessions" CD



Wow, this is real fucking r 'n' r! The ACTION SWINGERS start this CD off with a real noisy version of BLACK FLAG's "Fix Me", and it rolls so smoothly into the other songs that it could easily be mistaken for one of their own. A real trashed-out recording (and I mean that in a good way) with lots of noise and feedback. If you're reading Hit List for the reasons that we hope you are, then this one should be right up your alley. (BAM)

(REPTILIAN/403 S. BROADWAY/BALTIMORE, MD 21231)

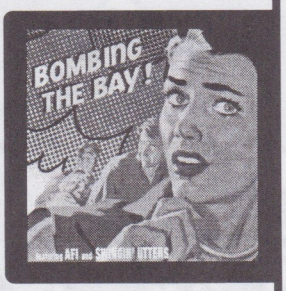
ACTION SWINGERS
"Heavy Medication" 7" EP



This could be my new favorite band. Straightforward trashed-out rock 'n' roll. This might be hard to imagine, but try BLACK FLAG doin' GG ALLIN songs. What could be better? Look out for this and then buy it. (BAM)

(REPTILIAN/403 S. BROADWAY/BALTIMORE, MD 21231)

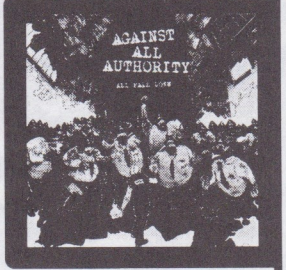
A.F.I./SWINGIN' UTTERS
split 7"



A.F.I. nail, almost a little too perfectly, the mighty DAG NASTY's "Values Here", while the UTTERS show the world why they're among the cream of the crop at what they do. This record isn't as readily available as it should be, but it's worth seeking out. (BAM)

(SESSIONS/15 JANIS WAY/SCOTTS VALLEY, CA 95066)

AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY
"All Fall Down" CD



This is like a great pizza with shit as the extra topping. The punk on this is great, and reminds me of early A.F.I. style melodic hardcore. But every time I started rockin' out to a song, they drop in some reggae-fied part. Not even some OP IVY style ska, which I can handle in doses, but weak reggae. If you can handle that aspect of this album, then the rest of it is brilliant. None for me, thanks. (BAM)

(HOPELESS/PO BOX 7495/VAN NUYS, CA 91409)

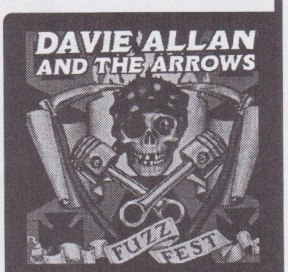
ALABAMA THUNDER PUSSY
"River City Revival"



If ANTISEEN had never heard punk rock, this might be what they'd sound like. ATP have the same sort of gruff vocals, raunchy guitar sound, and "redneck" ambience, but their songs are unfortunately more akin to plodding mid-70s hard rock. Call me a pencil-necked geek, but I couldn't stand such stuff back then, and I like it even less now. The 90's equivalent of dinosaur rock. (JB)

(MAN'S RUIN/610 22ND STREET #302/SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107)

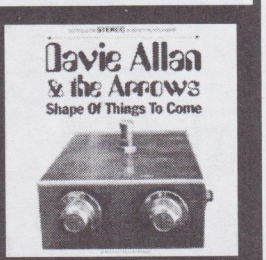
DAVIE ALLAN & THE ARROWS
"Fuzzfest" CD



The good: a new CD of new, not rehashed 60's songs by the king of the fuzz guitar—and it is not surf, its fuzz! The bad: a few of the songs are a little long, if I do say so myself. The ugly: if you like instrumentals and don't know who DAVIE ALLAN is, you must live in a cave. Old fans should grab this one. (GL)

(ALIVE/TOTAL ENERGY/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

DAVIE ALLAN & THE ARROWS
"Shape Of Things To Come/Vanishing Breed" 7"

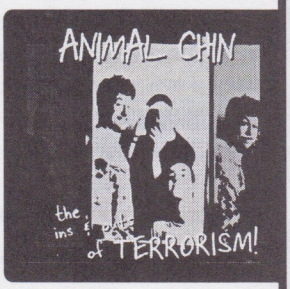


It's hard to review this one, since it came with a bunch of sticky crap all over it. What I could make out, though, was smokin' instrumental, fuzzy surf

guitar stuff, kind of a VENTURES meets AGENT ORANGE approach. Good stuff, and I'd like to hear more someday. (JC)

(TOTAL ENERGY/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

ANIMAL CHIN
"The Ins And Outs Of Terrorism" CD EP



Get ready to skank, kiddies! ANIMAL CHIN mix ska with a bit of that Epitaph/Fat-style snowrock, and thereby produce a bastardized version of two of my least favorite types of music. Lots of stuttering guitars and happy harmonizing choruses pervade their songs. I'm not really a fan of the ska revival, but if thats your cup of tea you might want to check these boys out. Then again...(IR)

(FUELED BY RAMAN/PO BOX 12563/GAINESVILLE, FL. 32604)

ANTISEEN
"Here to Ruin Your Groove" CD



The new ANTISEEN LP naturally contains some killer exemplars of their trademark stomp—growling vocals, distorted guitars, and a pummelling roughneck beat—including "Ugly American", "Self-Induced Lobotomy", and "O.D. for Me". But it soon becomes apparent that the record is more diverse than their standard knock down, dragged out sound, since one can find slower, moodier, piano-tickling pseudo-ballads ("People Like You"), psycho spoken word shit by the Dean of Sods, countrified tributes ("Billy the Kid"), and a "Sick Things" cover with a guest appearance of ex-ALICE COOPER guitarist Michael Bruce. (JB)

(BALONEY SHRAPNEL/PO BOX 6504/PHOENIX, AZ 85005)

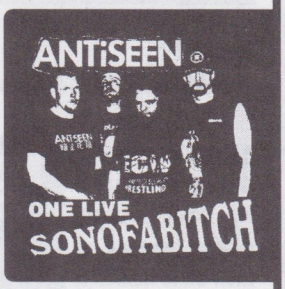
ANTISEEN
"Jailhouse/People Like You (Live)" 7"

New and pissed from the Confederacy Of Scum mainmen. The A-side is a proto-ANTISEEN raver. Like the RAMONES set on "spin-dry," run thru a wall of Black & Decker fuzzboxes, and sung with a throat straight out of the "Exorcist". The flip was recorded on a ghettoblaster, is of surprisingly good sonic quality, and ranks as one of my fave tunes from their extensive catalog. Highly recommended. (JD)



(RUFF-NITE/3249 RORER STREET/PHILADELPHIA, PA 19134)

ANTISEEN
"One Live Son Of A Bitch" CD



ANTISEEN don't give a fuck about your tired little "PC" world. These boys know how to rock, and if you like MOTORHEAD or the MENTORS you'll probably dig this! It contains 16 live tracks recorded back in 1995, including "I've Aged Twenty Years In Five", "Fuck All Y'all", and a bold cover of SKREWDRIVER'S "I Don't Like You". The guitar work is heavy, and the vocals are gruff as hell. ANTISEEN keep doing what they do, without following anyone else's rules, and this is probably one of the better live recordings that I've heard. Long live the Confederacy Of Scum! (IR)

(DEATH TRAIN/NO ADDRESS)

ARMCHAIR MARTIAN
"Monsters Always Scream" CD EP



Here is a combo that never fails, a good solid Ft. Collins band recording at the almighty Blasting Room. The only bad thing about this CD is the fact that it only contains 7 songs. It's a bit more rock than punk, but it has lots of melodies and muted guitars for all the kids. CD EP's are cheap, making them a good way to check out new bands. I suggest you take advantage of that here. (BAM)

(MY/PO BOX 170280/SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94117)

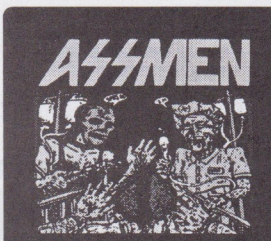
ASSHOLE PARADE
"LHIGHVE" 8 1/2" EP



This was recorded at KFJC, and sounds great. In between layin' down some serious superfast grindcore, there are lots of odd tempo shifts and some great heavy guitar work going on. It's worth checking out if you're a fan of the Slap A Ham sound. (BAM)

(DEEP SIX/PO BOX 6911/BURBANK, CA 91510)

ASSMEN
"Enema Nation" CD



Crunchy, medium-tempo punk in the E.F. vein with obnoxious lyrics and a decidedly belligerent tone. With songs like "I Wanna Date Your Daughter", "Beer is Good Food", "Hot Pearl Necklace", and "Burgerbreath", it's not too hard to figure out where the ASSMEN are coming from. Strangely enough, I find myself increasingly able to relate to such crude sentiments. A perfect record to get wasted and "fuck shit up" to. (JB)

(DIRTY/PO BOX 6869/GLENDALE, AZ 85312)

ATARIS
"Look Forward to Failure" CD



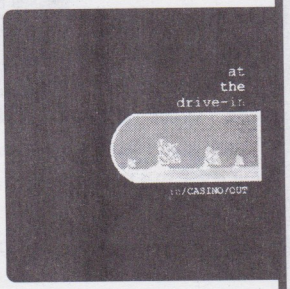
Just what the world doesn't need any more of—generic professional pop punk with sappy lyrics. Pop punk doesn't have to be this insipid, but nowadays it almost always is. If you like slick production, loud guitars, and melodic music that could have been spewed out by scores of currently interchange-

SHITLIST

really looking forward—probably vainly—to their failure. (JB)

(FAT/PO BOX 193690/SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94119)

AT THE DRIVE-IN
"In/Casino/Out" LP/CD



I saw A.T.D.I. a couple of months ago for the first time and was blown away by their intensity on stage. This album is just as good. Intricately crafted songs with amazing vocals and lyrics, especially "Napoleon Solo". Off the hinges. (JP)

(FEARLESS/13772 GOLDENWEST STREET #545/WESTMINISTER, CA 92683)

AVENGERS
"Died for Your Sins" CD



The AVENGERS were an important band in the history of punk. A solid band with a strong female singer, they helped create the San Francisco punk scene. Yet they've never been a band whose body of recorded work impressed me too much, although I'm sure if I'd seen them live back then I would have a whole different attitude. Alas, this CD does not do much to change that. If you're already a big fan or you want to check them out for the first time, than this should be great for you. It is currently their only release in print, and provides a complete overview of the band's career. Live tracks from way back when, demo tracks, studio nuggets, and some old songs recorded for the first time with a new line-up (The SCAVENGERS) featuring Penelope Houston, original guitarist Greg Ingram, Danny Panic (from SCREECHING WEASEL, etc.) on drums, and Joel from the MR. T EXPERIENCE filling in on bass. (JC)

(LOOKOUT/PO BOX 11374/BERKELEY, CA 94712)

BAD ROADS
"Blue Girl" 7" EP



The BAD ROADS were a 60's garage band from Louisiana, and this reissue contains their fast fuzzed-out STONES-influenced title song, as well as a moodier but no less fuzzy cut ("Too Bad"), a bluesly thing, and a bad KINKS cover. The vocals are nice and raw, but on occasion their rhythm section misses a beat—without, however, lessening the appeal of the two great songs on the A-side. (JB)

(SUNDAZED/PO BOX 85/COXSACKIE, NY 12051)

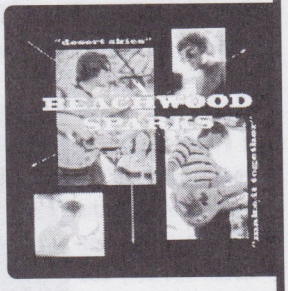
BANE
"Holding This Moment" LP/CD



I thought this was going to be crust for some reason, maybe because of their band name. It turned out to be pretty solid hardcore, reminiscent of IN MY EYES, with members of CONVERGE and TEN YARD FIGHT in the line-up. (JP)

(EQUAL VISION/PO BOX 14/HUDSON, NY 12534)

BEACHWOOD SPARKS
"Desert Skies/Make It Together" 7"



I'm not sure exactly why I received this record, but I assume it's because I would automatically hate it. This is weird, pseudo-psychedelic pop stuff that's reminiscent of the pop sound of Bloomington's VELO-DELUXE or the shitty wannabe hometown roots-rock of the JAYHAWKS. Not really my cup of tea. (JW)

(BOMP/PO BOX 71123/BURBANK, CA 91510)

BEES/PRIMITIVE ROLLERS
split 7" EP



I love this record. The BEES' side is full of raw-boned HUMPERS-style punk 'n' roll. They combine a trashy production and dirty lead breaks with nice choruses, so you can't really go wrong. The PRIMITIVE REBELS manage to live up to their name by offering us two primitive rockin' punkers with a HEARTBREAKERS' feel and an occasional slide guitar. Pelado does it again. (JB)

(PELADO/521 W. WILSON #B202/COSTA MESA, CA 82627)

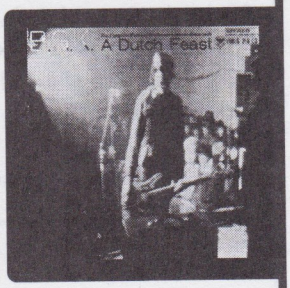
BELLRAYS/ADAM WEST
"Nights In Venice/Swlabr" split 7"



I'm usually not a huge fan of the split 7" thing, but any new output from the BELLRAYS has my attention. The BELRAYS' cut is a cover of the SAINTS, admittedly not one of my favorite trax from the downunder ones, but it's given the amped-up rock 'n' soul treatment and it gets my toes a-tappin'. ADAM WEST are a cool band from the Virginia/D.C. area, whose past singles are terrific barroom punk rockers, but this is a cover of CREAM, who I totally detest. Classic case of a good band who waste a track on a crap tune by a crap band. (JD)

(FANDANGO/1805 T STREET NW #A/WASHINGTON, DC 20009)

B.G.K.
"A Dutch Feast" CD

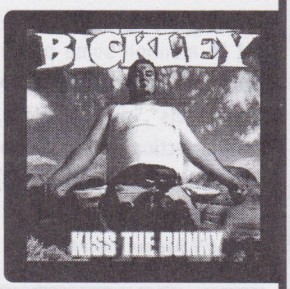


BALTHASAR GERARD'S KOMMANDO (B.G.K.) were an incredible hardcore band from Holland whose life span ran from 1982 to1988. Not hardcore like some big tattooed body-builder from Jersey singing about his alleged roots, but an intense, mindblowing wall of sociopolitical Hellfire that would make HENRY ROLLINS wet himself. This 46-song CD is

amazing, and contains both of their long-out-of-print albums, as well as a 7" and some great tracks from various compilations. It also includes fun, irreverent liner notes by Mykel Board. Easily one of the best of the recent wave of reissues. (JC)

(Alternative Tentacles/P.O. Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

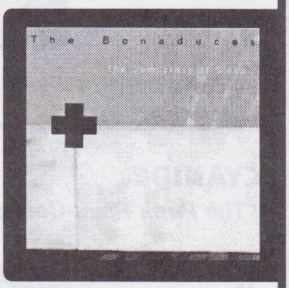
BICKLEY
"Kiss The Bunny" CD



This one has almost all the elements of modern punk rock that I hate. Lame generic pop-punk with lyrics that are either sexist, homophobic, misogynistic, or just plain retarded. Real winners like "Fuckwall", "Two Ton Tessie", and "She's My Beer" sum up the Cro-Magnon appeal of this group. Perfect music for date rape or a kegger. (JC)

(Fearless/13772 Goldenwest Street #545/Westminster, CA 92683)

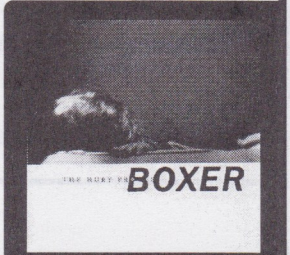
BONADUCES
"The Democracy of Sleep" CD



A textured, mildly catchy guitar-pop offering from Canada which on rare occasions (such as the first song) vaguely reminds me of something I like. Far more often, it has that cloying, pedantic, and wimpy "emo"-ish quality that I'd be ecstatic never to hear again. Absolutely nothing on here would offend dorky college radio listeners, which is always a bad sign. (JB)

(Endearing/PO Box 69009/Winnepeg, Manitoba R3P 2G9/CANADA)

BOXER
"The Hurt Process" CD



Yeah, this really is the hurt process. Horrible emo pop has never been my idea of fun, but for some reason this just seems more annoying than the rest of the faceless, generic, 90's new wave of new wave pseudo-punk that I've been assaulted by over the years. (RF)

(Vagrant/2118 Wilshire Blvd. #361/Santa Monica, CA 90403)

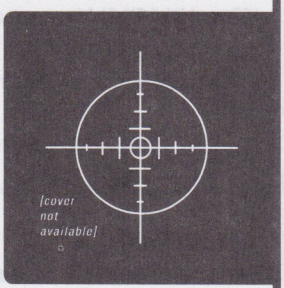
BRIDES
"Bad Attitude/Waiting for You" 7"



Hell, yeah. Whenever Rip Off allows its bands to record in a less trebly or reedy way, the results are always more satisfying. This new BRIDES 45 outshines their admittedly more intense debut by virtue of its heavier sound and guitar power. At times it almost sounds like Stiv Bators is singing on the slower "Waiting for You". (JB)

(Rip Off/581 Maple Avenue/San Bruno, CA 94066)

BULEMICS
"Old Enough To Know Better...Too Young To Care" CD

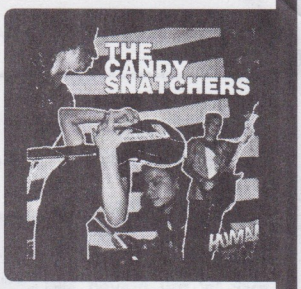


Austin's finest, the BULEMICS, deliver sleazy, unadulterated, raw-as-fuck punk rock. It's obvious that these boys are fueled on nothing less than hot, wet porno flicks, shitty B movies, and screaming rock 'n' roll. The BULEMICS borrow heavily from the DWARVES—Gerry's vocals sound like a cross between Blag Dahlia and Stiv Bators—and other like-minded sick fucks who write witty songs which perfectly illustrate their total disregard for anyone or anything else. They're complete degenerates, and I like it like that. (JW)

(Junk/PO Box 1474/Cypress, CA 90630)

CANDY SNATCHERS
"Human Zoo" CD

The CANDY SNATCHERS serve up a steamy, shit-hot platter of raw-as-fuck, sleazy, bloody punk rock 'n' roll in the vein of the HEARTBREAKERS, the STOOGES, and the KIDS, but with a 90's twist. These guys have a bit of a garage influence also, most notably on tracks like "Hooligan" and "Killin' My Buzz". The energy on this CD simply never lets up, and most songs clock in at under a minute and half—short, loud, fast, and to the point. (JW)



(Go Kart/PO Box 20, Prince Street Station/NY, NY 10012)

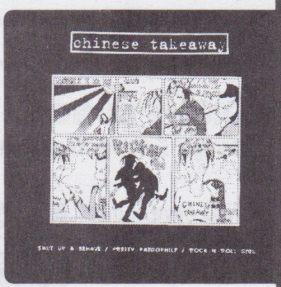
CHESTERFIELD KINGS/LYRES
split 7"



Two of the greatest and longest running 60s-inspired garage bands play each others' most famous songs on this "battle of the bands". The LYRES do an organ-heavy version of the C-KINGS' classic "She Told Me Lies", whereas the latter do a snottier version of the former's great "Help You Ann" with a cool harmonica solo. It's hard to say who wins this titanic struggle, but the missing "vibrato" organ sound of "Ann" is at first listen disconcerting. (JB)

(Living Eye/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

CHINESE TAKEAWAY
"Shut Up & Behave" EP

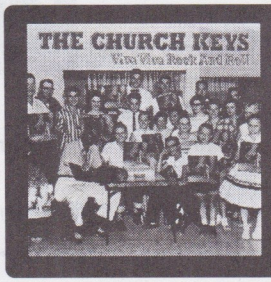


A raunchy Swedish outfit that sounds more American than most Yank bands, many of whom are nowadays trying to sound English or Irish. This EP is yet another example of the Pelado label's addiction to primo punk 'n' roll, and once again evokes SOCIAL D's dirtier booze-soaked origins, even though the band also shamelessly rip off RAMONES' intros, take their name from an ADICTS' song, and do a cover of RAPED's "Pretty Paedophile". (JB)

SHITLIST

(PELADO/521 W. WILSON #B202/COSTA MESA, CA 92627)

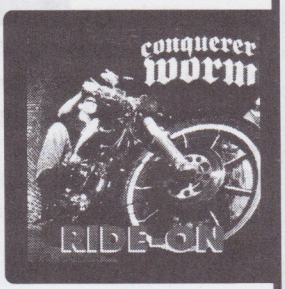
CHURCH KEYS
"Viva Viva Rock And Roll" EP



Genuine 50's/early 60's rock 'n' roll played straight up by five mongoloid-lookin' middle-aged people. Not really my thing, but something to shake the love-handles to, you know, for all of you disgustingly overweight, 35-year old virgins out there who are into kickin' around that "Pebbles" sound. (RF)

(NORTON/PO BOX 646, COOPER STATION/NEW YORK, NY 10003)

CONQUERER WORM
"Ride-On" CD



A collection of covers of 70's biker rocker SIMON STOKES, as performed by ANTISEEN's Jeff Clayton, RANCID VAT's Phil Irwin, and Mike Schuppe, plus other COS guests. The music is your basic pre-punk blues-oriented, slightly psyched-out boogie rock, updated and made rawer for the 90s, but despite occasional flashes of humor and intensity, the result is a rather boring novelty record. (JB)

(BALONEY SHRAPNEL/PO BOX 6504/PHOENIX, AZ 65005)

CONNIE DUNGS
"Songs for Swinging Nice Guys" CD



If you have enough sense to prefer "Grow Up" to the latest QUEERS LP, then this would definitely be the one CONNIE DUNGS record you'd need. It's a 25-track compilation of earlier releases, including material on long unavailable cassettes, which displays the raw edge and belligerence they've since attenuated. They can still write hook-filled pop punk songs, but the stuff on here blows their more recent offerings away. Have a listen to stellar tracks like "Cowboy", "Yay Jesus", and "Teenage Punks on Talk Shows", with their hilarious lyrics and snooty vibe, and you'll understand what I mean. (JB)

(MUTANT POP/5010 NW SHASTA/CORVALIS, OR 97330)

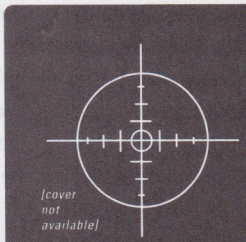
CORN DOGGY DOG & THE 1/2 POUND
"Hang' In On" CD



Trashed-out punk satire with cliche-ridden rock guitar frills and goofy lyrics. Normally I really like this type of stuff, which is vaguely in the DICTATORS or MEATMEN vein, but in this instance it's neither particularly funny nor musically memorable. A lyric sheet might help to resolve the former problem, but most of the tracks here—"Water", "Hell No", the instrumental "Falling Idols", and funny reworked versions of VANILLA ICE and BLACK FLAG songs are the exceptions—don't really grab me. Great band name, though, and they may rock out big time live. (JB)

(SKUNK/16572 BURKE LANE/HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA 92647)

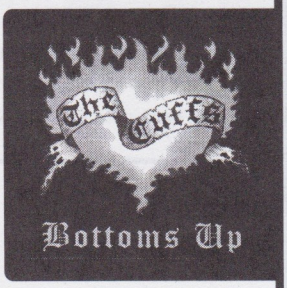
CROATAN
"Violent Passion Surragte" CD



Oh, my fucking LORD. Wait, I gotta collect my thoughts here...This is bad. This is amazingly bad. A new level of awful manifested in thrashy, miserable hesher prog rock. What compels people to humiliate themselves by throwing together awful bands like this? And what's even stranger is that this little intensive stroke-fest was actually appreciated enough to be released. My faith in humanity has been destroyed. (RF)

(MAN'S RUIN/610 22ND STREET #302/SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94107)

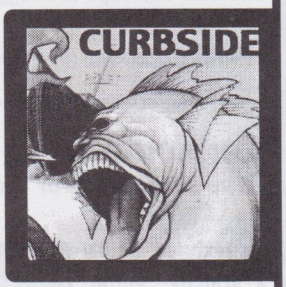
CUFFS
"Bottoms Up" CD



Hard-edged and generally uptempo street-punk with tuff-sounding guitars, sandpaper vocals, and singalong choruses. There's plenty of musical muscle and surliness to be found in the grooves here, not to mention some pretty damn good songs (such as "Too Much Confusion", "No More", "Hit the Streets", and "Vision"), but at times the rhythm section collapses into a shambles and the lyrics are none too clever. (JB)

(RADICAL/77 BLEECKER STREET #C2-21/NEW YORK, NY 10012)

CURBSIDE
LP/CD



Fast, angry hardcore punk behind lyrics covering basic everyday struggles. If that's your thing, this is your thing. (JP)

(RUDDY DUCK C/O SKREWED PROD./PO BOX 111085/CAMPBELL, CA 95011-1085)

CYANIDE
"The Punk Rock Collection" CD



A reissue comp of material by one of the lesser '77 punk bands. I wasn't impressed with CYANIDE the first time around, but thought I'd give them another chance after 20 years. Alas, most of the material here (excepting "Fireball", "Your Old Man", and the unreleased "Your World") is completely pedestrian. You know there's a problem when one of their best tunes is a lousy cover of the WHO's "I'm a Boy". (JB)

(CAPTAIN OI/PO BOX 501/HIGH WYCOMBE, BUCKS HP10 80A/ENGLAND)

DAKOTA
"I Got Called A Teenager On The 10 O'Clock News" EP



Three songs of sludgy, worthless emo turd-music. The upper management here at Hit List slipped me a little memo saying, "It might not be what you're into, but these kids are sincere". Not really. Sincerity means picking up the phone and reaching out for some honest psychiatric help to deal with your incessant bedwetting "issues", something these little guys obviously haven't done yet. (RF)

(TWISTWORTHLESS/PO BOX 4491/AUSTIN, TX 78765)

DAMNATION
"Drunk and Stupid" CD EP



Six quick rockin' songs. This would fit in well with the ZEKE/NASHVILLE PUSSY scene, but also has a heavy MISFITS and NECROS influence. Flipside has been raving about this band for a while. I am still not entirely convinced, but this EP shows some definite promise. (JC)

(R.A.F.R./11054 VENTURA BLVD. #205/STUDIO CITY, CA 91604)

DAYGLO ABORTIONS
"Stupid World, Stupid Songs" CD



This thing is essential. 23 songs. Over an hour's worth of music documenting this band's fucked up perverted run as one of Canada's "punkest" (although quite metal at times) bands. This contains primo selections from all their previous releases. Fucked up songs for a fucked up world. I love this. (BAM)

(GOD/44132-3170 TILL I CUM RD/VICTORIA, BC V9A 7H7/CANADA)

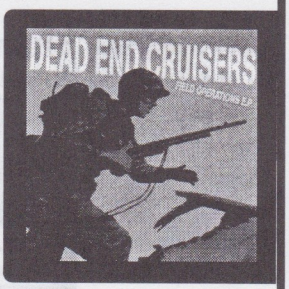
DEAD BOYS
"All This And More" double CD



The cover of the CD says "2 CD's of rare and previously unheard live recordings, 1977/1978". That pretty much sums it up. If you don't know about the raw r 'n' r power of the DEAD BOYS by now, then you'd probably be better off with your nose in a PP right now. All the songs you would expect , plus a couple of great cover songs (including IGGY's "Search And Destroy"). This is one to get. (BAM)

(BOMP/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

DEAD END CRUISERS
"Field Operation" 7" EP



The first track, "Another Night", is a great mid-tempo rocker, since it's both pretty melodic and very tuff. But "Live Young" leaves me a little high 'n' dry, since the vocals are a bit weak and the melodies are pretty-run-of-the-mill. The EDDIE & THE HOT ROD's cover ("Do Anything You Wanna Do") is OK, but there's not anything new happening here. (JW)

(TKO/4104 24TH STREET #103/SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94114)

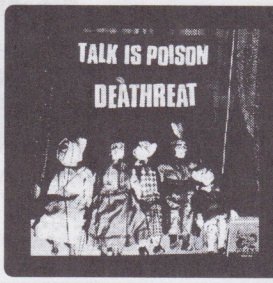
DEATH STAR
"Death Star" 10" EP



Another snoozer from Silver Girl. This band from Chico probrobly thinks they are making really clever music. In reality it is flaccid, J-CHUCH-like nerd rock. Lots of artsy-fartsy guitar and drum work that goes nowhere. (JC)

(SILVER GIRL/PO BOX 161024/SAN DIEGO, CA 92176)

DEATHREAT/TALK IS POISON
split 7" EP



DEATHREAT, a side project from Paul and Todd from HIS HERO IS GONE, is musically similar to their aforementioned band, so fans who like a little crust in their punk will not be disappointed. TALK IS POISON's contribution is equally ferocious in it's aggro-ness, and manages to stand up to DEATHREAT blow for blow. Ah, the power and the fury! (KB)

(PRANK/PO BOX 410892/SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94141-0892)

DEMONS
"...Come Burstin Out!" 10" EP



Just in case you haven't noticed, there's an explosion of excellent punkrock kicking it's way outta Sweden and greater Scandinavia. These young bands are the bastard spawn of the NOMADS, HANOI ROCKS, D.A.D. and the LEATHER NUN, and must have been raised on a diet of DICTATORS and DEAD BOYS records in the frozen shadow of radioactive Russia. If it sounds romantic, it ain't...but it makes for some awful rippin' music. On this 6-track EP, I suppose fellow Swedes the HELLACOPTERS are the obvious comparison. Both play brutally adrenal punk, but while the 'COPTERS are sorta NUGENT-on-caffeine, the DEMONS stray more into DEVIL DOG/LAZY COWGIRL melody and superior tunefulness. Much preferred, it rocks me. (JD)

(STEER/TORBJORN KLOCKARES GATA 5-9A/11330 STOCKHOLM/SWEDEN)

DEVOTCHKAS
"Oi Toy" 7" EP

Here's that rarest of rarities, a primarily female Oi band. Three NY-area yobettes (and one guy) with Rene fringes, mohawks, and other outrageous punk hairdos belt out four aggressive

SHITLIST

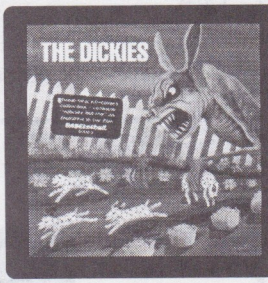
blustering, chaotic songs one can find some funny yet bitchy and cliquish lyrics about "Oi Toy[s]" and "whores...[who] should be tested 'cause [they] must be infested." Definitely worth checking out. (JB)



(Punkcore/PO Box 916/Middle Island, NY 11953)

DICKIES
"Dogs from the Hare that Bit Us" CD

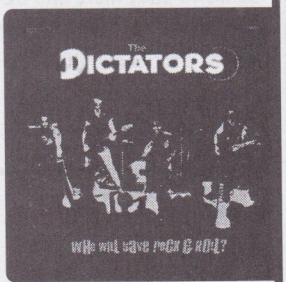
A brand-new DICKIES collection of cover songs. The DICKIES have always subjected other peoples' originals, whether good or bad, to their own distinctively punked-out treatment, usually to excellent effect. On this CD they offer appealing versions of songs by the WEIRDOS, URIAH HEEP (impossible not to improve upon!), the BEATLES, and the HUMAN BEINGS alongside disposable versions of HOLLIES, KNACK, IRON BUTTERLY, and DONOVAN tracks. All in all a mixed bag, but nothing here is quite up to the exalted standards set by "Paranoid" or "Nights in White Satin". (JB)



(Triple X/Box 862529/Los Angeles, CA 90086-2529)

DICTATORS
"Who Will Save Rock & Roll/The Savage Beat" 7"

Classic melodic rock 'n' roll. The A-side makes you want to stand on your kitchen table, play air guitar, and sing along. I figured that there was no way that the B-side could even begin to compare, but these relics proved me wrong. A must-have record. (BAM)



(Norton/PO Box 646/New York, NY 10276)

DIGGER
"The Promise Of An Uncertain Future" CD

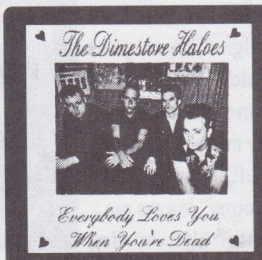
These guys sound a helluvalot like WESTON. That, of course, can only be a good thing. Infectious power-pop, hard driving melodies, some sumptious vocal harmonies which would make the BEACH BOYS blush, and a rockin', toe-tappin' good time—unless you actually ruminate on the angst-ridden lyrics. The last "blues" track on the record is self-indulgent garbage, but we can forgive them that. (RK)



(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

DIMESTORE HALOES
"Everybody Loves You When You're Dead" 7" EP

Crunchy mid-tempo drunk punk with "down-and-out" lyrical themes, dirty yet tasteful guitar breaks, tear-jerking melodies, and jaded yet belligerent vocals. Perhaps the best comparison would be to a much more wasted version of SOCIAL DISTORTION. That's definitely a compliment, and "Hopelessly in Hate with You" may be the song title of the year. (JB)



(Pelado/521 W. Wilson #B202/Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

DIMESTORE HALOES
"Hate My Generation/Slow Suicide" 7"

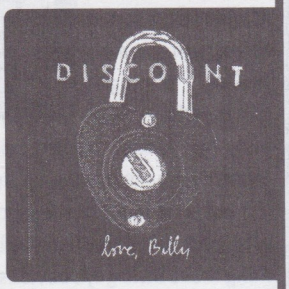
This is pretty generic "punk" rock 'n' roll. These boys listen to a lot of CLASH and end up sounding like RANCID, especially on "Hate My Generation". The DH's pull off a vaguely street punk-ish type sound, but they really aren't that tough at all. This seems a bit soul-less, and I'm not moved. Junk Records has a pretty good track record for raging punk rock 'n' roll, and I guess I was expecting more. (JW)



(Junk/PO Box 1474/Cypress, CA 90630)

DISCOUNT
"Love Billy" CD EP

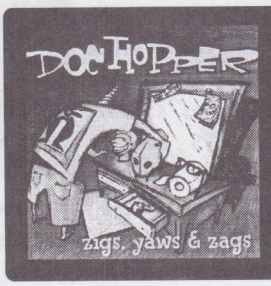
DISCOUNT cover five BILLY BRAGG tunes. I am a real fan of DISCOUNT's brand of infectious power-pop, but to be honest I thought that this was pretty lacklustre. They are much better tunesmiths than Mr. BRAGG. I suspect this is largely for those that uncritically adore DISCOUNT and/or BILLY BRAGG. (RK)



(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

DOC HOPPER
"Zigs, Yaws, and Zags" LP/CD

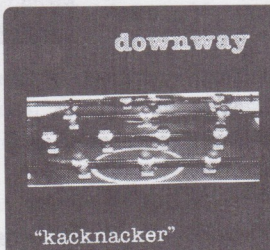
This is another one of those bands that I hear about all the time but never seem to catch live. The tunes are reminiscent of ALL and sometimes HUSKER DU, blending common pop progressions with cute and cuddly harmonies. Every few songs they start trying to rock out or play some harder punk, but I think they do the pop punk thing better. Good music to pick flowers with your girlfriend to. (JP)



(Go Kart/PO Box 20, Prince St. Station/New York, NY 10012)

DOWNWAY
"Kacknacker" CD

Typical SoCal-style punk in the FACE TO FACE vein. It features good harmonies and backing vocals, but the songwriting seems quite dry



and uninspired. There's absolutely nothing new here, and it's definitely not the strongest stuff on the 206 label. (BAM)

(206/8314 Greenwood Ave. N, Suite 102/Seattle, WA 98103)

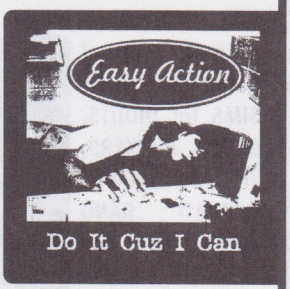
DRAGONS
"Cheers To Me" LP



Junk records can drink your lame label under the table. This release reminds one of a modern day REPLACEMENTS, in the good sense of that term. A strong rock 'n' roll stumble over swagger, mixed with fine pop sensibilities. This is the first that I have heard of them, but I'm definitely gonna keep an eye out for them in the future. (JC)

(Junk/PO Box 1474/Cypress, CA 90630)

EASY ACTION
"Do It Cuz I Can/Solitary Confinement" 7"



This great label may be one of the best kept secrets out there, or even the Eighth Wonder of the World. Another trashy rock 'n' roll scorcher, which isn't surprising since the band takes its name from an ALICE COOPER LP. This reminds me of some of the earlier singles from the DWARVES. (BAM)

(Reptilian/403 S. Broadway/Baltimore, MD 21231)

ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN
"I'm Not Your Nothing" 7"/CD EP



The title track rocks the house in typical EF fashion, and gives me real high hopes for their forthcoming album. I believe that EF's songwriting, combined with Steve Miller's vocals, makes them one of the best combos going right now. However, the two tracks on the flipside are quite unnecessary. One is a silly cover of a silly song ("I Was A Punk Before You Were A Punk" by the TUBES), and the other is a live version of "Right On Target". The A-side alone makes this worth getting. (BAM)

(Victory/PO Box 146546/Chicago, IL 60614)

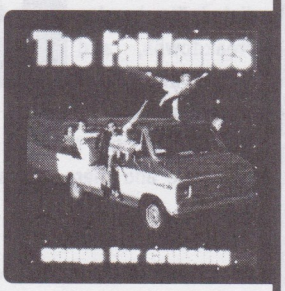
EUNUCHS
"Revved-Up Youth On A Thrill Rampage" LP



Pretty lo-fi SUPERCHARGER-esque rock 'n' roll. Sack O' Shit usually delivers genuine, stripped-down punk, but a lot of it just isn't that interesting beyond its seemingly honest "I don't give a fuck!" approach. The standout song here is Jay Reatard's "You Must Hate Yourself". On one other positive note, the song titles are hilarious, such as "(My Baby Is A) Wild Ride " and "Big Tited Girlfriend", with titted spelled incorrectly, no less! (JW)

(Sack O' Shit/PO Box 308/Kankakee, IL 60901)

FAIRLANES
"Songs for Cruising" LP/CD



If you're in a band I'm sure you've had the experience of reading a review of your music where the reviewer makes some obscure comparison with a band that sounds nothing like you. You could sound like SCREECHING WEASEL and there's always going to be a review that says you sound like EARTH CRISIS. Anyway, the point is I can safely say that these guys sound exactly like BLINK 182, musically, vocally, and lyrically, without making that mistake. (JP)

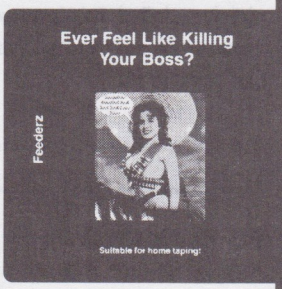
(Suburban Home/1750 30th Street #365/Boulder, CO 80301)

FATSO JETSON
"Flames For All" CD

Wow, how did this slip by Mans Ruin's quality control? At least it isn't another hesher, stoner-rock band. FATSO JETSON slips easily between spacey rock and the more straightahead variety of rock 'n' roll. They are sort of a 90's prog band, blending genres with noodley guitar work in a really nauseating and annoying way. (KB)

(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street #302/San Francisco, CA 94107)

FEEDERZ
"Ever Feel Like Killing Your Boss?" CD



At last. A sandpapered CD reissue of the provocative first LP by the late, great FEEDERZ, which sounds as fresh today as it did when was first released. From the sardonic and vitriolic "Have You Never Been Mellow" through the bitter "Jesus [Entering from the Rear]" to the intense "Fuck You", what you'll find is an obnoxious, bile-filled sonic assault featuring psycho vocals, generally fast tempos, a remarkably non-distorted guitar sound, and too many eccentric, herky jerky rhythm changes. The cartoon insert on working remains as hilarious and relevant as ever. (JB)

(Flaming Banker/c/o Botanica Lucumi/8016 15th Avenue NE/Seattle, WA 98115)

FLAT DUO JETS
"Four on the Floor" CD



The good: the JETS have been around forever, and are a little hard to pigeonhole, altho they have sort of a simple, basic, old-style rockabilly sound. The bad: 16 songs, and you know how I feel about that. The ugly: not as punk as I would like. Give these guys some Marshalls, then let's see what happens. (GL)

(Panic Button/PO Box 148010/Chicago, IL 60614)

SHITLIST

FUCK ON THE BEACH
"Power Violence Forever" CD



Anybody who knows anything about grindcore knows that Slap A Ham is the real deal. You can consistently pick up pretty much anything on that label and be completely satisfied. This is no exception. 21 tracks of "power violence" in its truest forms. Check this bad boy out. (BAM)

(Slap A Ham/PO Box 420843/San Francisco, CA 94142)

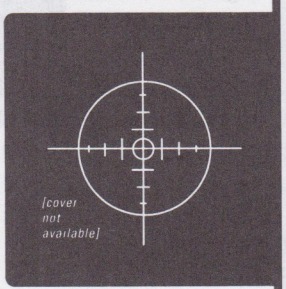
FU MANCHÜ
"Eatin' Dust" CD



"Eatin' ASS" is more like it. Why do all these BLACK SABBATH-suckin', hesher losers pull off their OZZY opuses so poorly? This is just totally uninteresting, boring music. All of the musical texture that existed in late 60's/early 70's stoner rock 'n' roll, which has admittedly never been my thing, has been fuckin' pissed on by these dirtheads who are obviously into it. This just plain sucks. (RF)

(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street #302/San Francisco, CA 94107)

FUMES
"Pure Bad Luck" CD



Guitar-heavy, well-produced punk from Spokane. Most FUMES' songs have good melodies or riffs and brisk but not overly fast tempos, and the band is undeniably tight and professional. My only criticism is that they sometimes veer a bit too much toward that generic-sounding stuff that's unfortunately omnipresent these days. Even so, I'll bet they're pretty raw and animated in person. (JB)

(Scooch Pooch/5850 W. 3rd Street #209/Los Angeles, CA 90036)

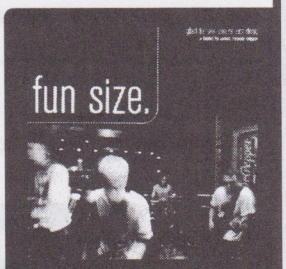
FUNERAL ORATION
"Survival" CD



Another new record from these Dutch stalwarts. While they pay more than a nod to the SoCal melodic hardcore sound, there are enough eclectic stylings to successfully make them almost impossible to pigeonhole. Most of all, the singer, while strong, refuses to vocalise in that layered, almost syrupy harmonic style first patented by BAD RELIGION. Thus they retain an almost quaint, old-fashioned (by contemporary standards) European sound in their brand of melodic hardcore. (RK)

(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

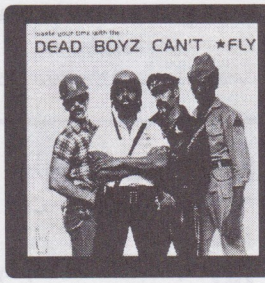
FUN SIZE
"Glad To See Your Not Dead" CD



Another great Richmond-area band, although musically they almost have that California sound dialed. The breaks, breakdowns, and lyrical and vocal power separate this from the rest of today's melodic hardcore releases. There's a touch of emo here and there, but at least it's not ska! (BAM)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

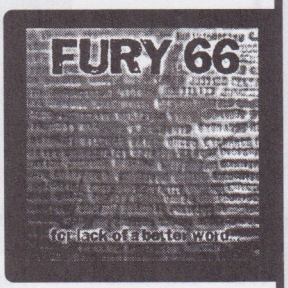
FURIES/DEAD BOYZ CAN'T FLY
split 7" EP



The FURIES crank out a couple of good pop punk songs, both with a noticeable SCREECHING WEASEL influence; "She's a Rocket Queen" is the heavier of the two, and has a RAMONES-y drum intro and break. DEAD BOYZ CAN'T FLY dish out a snotty 77-ish punker with a "hey, hey, hey" bridge and a scatalogical chorus ("Piss & Love") along with a less appealing thrash-like number. (JB)

(Supersonic Refridge/Via Boccadasse 33-17/16146 Genoa/ITALY)

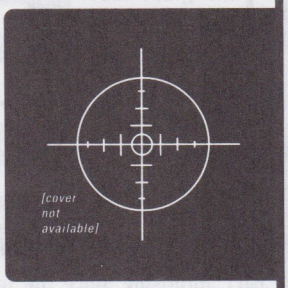
FURY 66
"For Lack of a Better Word" LP/CD



These guys get exponentially better with each release, delivering 12 tracks of melodic hardcore here. Unfortunately, they didn't include their CRO MAGS cover of "World Peace" on this one, but they make up for it with guest appearances by Davey Havok of A.F.I. and Doug Sangalang of LIMP. "Self-Will" is a standout track, but they all rock. (JP)

(Sessions/15 Janis Way/Scotts Valley, CA 95066)

GAZA STRIPPERS
"Laced Candy" CD



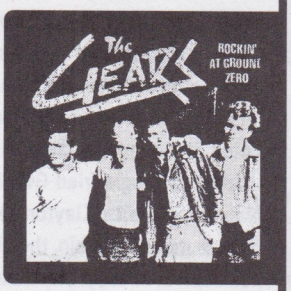
Great band name. RICK SIMS (of DIDJITS, SUPER SUCKERS, and LEE HARVEY OSWALD BAND fame) is back and more arrogant than ever. 10 tracks of punk rock's premier guitar god nut case. This album has a huge sound, without sounding too overproduced. It only floats off into space for a little while, but stays mostly grounded with thick rock 'n' roll and guitar solos a-plenty. It's not better than any of his earlier projects, but that is some hard material to top. (JC)

(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street #302/San Francisco, CA 94107)

GEARS
"Rockin' at Ground Zero" CD

A timely reissue of one of the best SoCal punk LPs (plus bonus 7" tracks) from the early 1980s. Emerging from the remnants of the mighty CONTROLLERS and other 77-style groups, the GEARS produced a number of killer "beachpunk" songs (especially "Don't Be Afraid to Pogo", "The

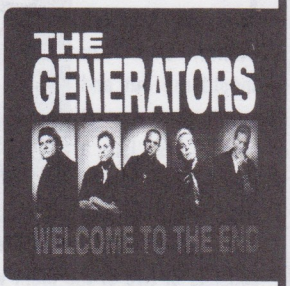
Last Chord", "High School Girls", and "I Smoke Dope") and featured Kidd Spike's slashing r 'n' r guitar playing as well as both humorous and occasionally serious ("Elks Lodge Blues") lyrics. Highly recommended. (JB)



(Dionysus/PO Box 1975/Burbank, CA 91507)

GENERATORS
"Welcome to the End" CD

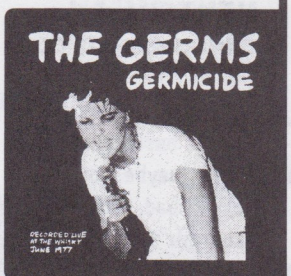
The GENERATORS obviously love the CLASH. That's not necessarily a bad thing, and there are several anthemic rockers with CLASH signatures on here (such as "Yankee Boy" and "Voices in the Night"). Nor can one complain about their musical chops or, e.g., their Celtic ballad ("Freedom"). What bothers me, though, is the rather slick, overproduced, and "professional" quality of the whole LP. It remains to be seen whether they have a genuine punk ethos or are simply trying to be the "next big thing" a la U2. (JB)



(Triple X/PO Box 862529/Los Angeles, CA 90086)

GERMS
"Germicide" CD

One of the more endearing things about the GERMS was their literal attachment to complete rock n' roll destruction. Even in their finer, tighter moments, things were always hanging on the edge of chaos. This live album (recorded during their debut gig at the Whiskey in 1977) highlights this cacophony, but that alone doesn't necessarily make for a good time. Basically, you've got four different people playing four different things at the same time. While somewhat interesting in that oddly appealing historical way, I'm not sure if Bomp should have rereleased this album. (RF)



(Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

GOB
"How Far Shallow Takes You" CD

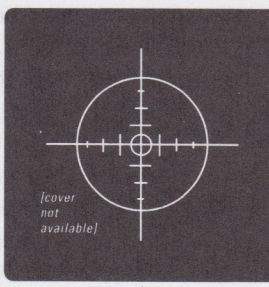
I can't quite decide whether I'm ambivalent about this disc or whether I love it. There aren't really any lows on it, but there's only one seriously brilliant song that really slays me here—"On These Days", which reminds me a little of the last SCREW 32 record. If the whole record was like this, it'd definitely be one of my top ten of 1999. Unfortunately, unlike NOFX, GOB doesn't seamlessly blend genres...there's a SCREECHING WEASEL-type song here, a SICK OF IT ALL song there, and while they're all well-done, the record seems almost more like a comp than one band. (DGJ)



(Fearless/13772 Goldenwest Street #545/Westminster, CA 02683)

GONADS
"Oi Nutter/England's Glory" 7"

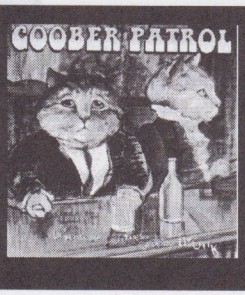
Ah, the return of the GONADS, presumably sans Garry Bushell. One can only guess who's in the band these days, but this turned out to be a surprisingly good 45. "Oi Nutter" is a heavy-duty uptempo shitkicker, whereas the B-side is a satirical drinking man's ode to England's faded past. (JB)



(Pub City Royal/4104 24th Street #376/San Francisco, CA 94114)

GOOBER PATROL
"The Unbearable Lightness of Being Drunk"

Okay, first off, this album is hands down the winner for Best Album Title of 1999. That said, the record's not bad, but it's not nearly as good as the title. It's an affable, rocking combination of inebriated British screaming over boogied-up, occasionally J CHURCH-esque riffing. It's nice to see Fat broadening their sound...this sure as hell sounds nothing like NOFX, but as the title suggests, it's really only appropriate for consumption with copious amounts of booze. (DGJ)



(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA 94119)

GRABBIES
"Another Boring Day" 7" EP

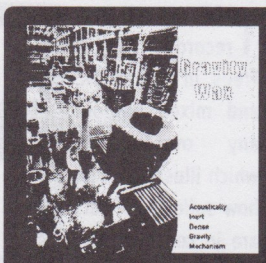
Manic, pummelling bile-filled attack from an Italian band that verges on—and at times actually attains—thrash speed. The mix is very raw, the vocals are very snotty, and the lyrics are very negative. Their motto is "punk=death", but hopefully their sleeve portrayal of anarchists as "traitors" is meant as a provocation rather than to be taken seriously. (JB)



(Proud to Be Idiot/c/o Alessandro Nodari/Via Arezovo 17c/37125 Verona/ITALY)

GRAVITY WAX
"Acoustically Inert Dense Gravity Mechanism" 10" EP

Super wimpy pop—there is no punk at all on this one. On the faster tracks they sound like a watered-down MONKEES, on the slower ones they have a GUIDED BY VOICES or STEREOLAB kind of feel. Not my cup of tea at all. (JC)



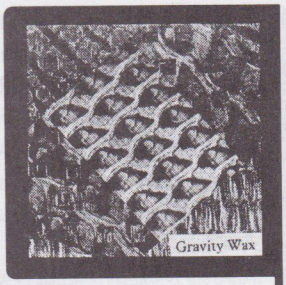
(Silver Girl/PO Box 161024/San Diego, CA 92176)

GRAVITY WAX
"Horseshoe/Prattle" 10"

Super wimpy pop—there's no punk on this one. On the faster tracks they sound like a

SHITLIST

sion of the MONKEES, and their slower tracks will put you to sleep faster than a double dose of Nyquil. Thank god this is only a 10" record. (JC)



(Silver Girl/P.O. Box 161024/San Diego, CA 92176)

GRINCH/LOST GOAT
split LP

I feel ripped off! This is supposed to be a Probe release. WHERE ARE THE TITS? Anyway, to the music. This is sort of a soundtrack to living death. A mid-paced metal stoner rock version of deathcore, with both bands vying with each other in some sort of scream-off contest. GRINCH is the clear winner here, if only because the singer has a child molestor's voice. (BAM)



(Probe/PO Box 5068/Pleasonton, CA 94566)

HAGFISH
"Caught Live" CD

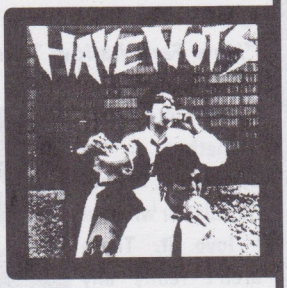
This record was recorded live at Trees in Dallas TX, and mixed without any overdubbing, which illustrates just how solid these cats are in concert. Any fuckups only lend charm to this recording, which will be the last with this line-up. I was listening to it at work the other day and a friend commented that the songs and onstage banter were fairly juvenile. Well fuck, that's the whole point! Great boyish pop punk in the vein of late-model DESCENDENTS, it kicks ass, and it'd be a great record to have sex to—but only if you don't mind cracking up with laughter in the midst of the throes of passion. (DGJ)



(Coldfront/PO Box 8345/Berkeley, CA 94707)

HAVE NOTS
"Do It Again" LP

TEENGENERATE meets the NEW BOMB TURKS. 12 totally rockin' no frills gems. Three spastic Japanese kids and one cool San Francisco label with the good taste to put them out, albeit in a simple and cheap packaging job. I hope this record does well for them so that they can snazz up the next one a bit. (JC)



(Repent/535 Stevenson Street/San Francisco, CA 94103)

HELLACOPTERS/GLUECIFER
"Respect The Rock" split CD

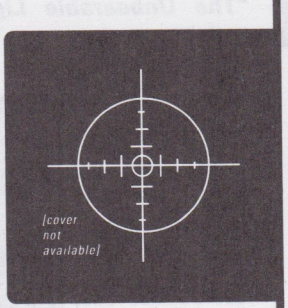
The HELLACOPTERS have finally become complete cock rock cartoons. At first there's nothing that seems at odds with their ordinary M.O.: loud guitars, goofy wah wah leads, that migrane-inducing distorted whine that gets credited as "vocals". It just sounds like the old HELLACOPTERS. Then they launch into their LYNYRD SKYNYRD cover and just blow it. If this was some kinda joke, you'd laugh it off, but you know it's totally serious and therefore horrifying. Then you get to hear GLUECIFER milk that big, limp hard-rock utter for another five songs, and you snap and throw on your G.G. ALLIN & THE JABBERS LP to try and douche out the misery you just forced yourself to sit through. At least that's what I did. (RF)



(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street #302/San Francisco, CA 94107)

HELLSTOMPER/BEFORE I HANG
split CD

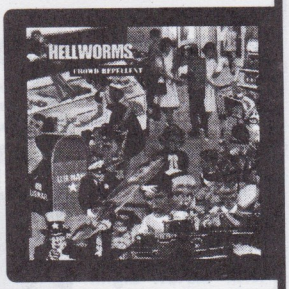
HELLSTOMPER is a self-described "long-haired redneck band" from Georgia, and that's exactly what they sound like. The do lo-fi punked-out versions of trashy traditional and country songs—as well as a few originals—about boozin', fightin', and wenchin', and combine that with upfront Dixie pride (as reflected in their hilarious sleeve poster, "Don't Blame Us, We Voted for Jefferson Davis"). BEFORE I HANG are more of a boogie-fried GG-like punk outfit (from Mississippi) with Clayton-like growls who sing odes to gun ownership, the Ebola virus, and small penises. All in all, pretty damn entertaining. (JB)



(Baloney Shrapnel/PO Box 6504/Phoenix, AZ 65005)

HELLWORMS
"Crowd Repellent" CD

If you are/were a fan of VICTIMS FAMILY, then you should run out and get this. To me it sounds just like a new VF release, which isn't surprising since the band consists of two of the main VF guys joined by the drummer from a band called WALRUS. If anything their sound is a bit tighter and more groove-orientated than those of their previous bands. For the uninitiated, these guys play frantic, musically dense songs with hard-hitting lyrics that dissect social status (such as "Zillionare" and "What's Your Excuse"), rip apart music posturing and pretentions ("Cock Rock Superstars", "Sell Out", and "We're from Manchester"), or delve into politics ("Baby Kisser" and "Master Manipulater"). Imagine a more hyper NOMEANSNO.



(Alternative Tentacles/P.O. Box 419092/San Francisco, CA 94141)

HENTCHMEN
"Broad Appeal" CD

The good: I don't like basic surf (altho maybe you do). The bad: I don't like basic surf. The ugly: I don't like basic surf. (GL)



(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/NY, NY 10003)

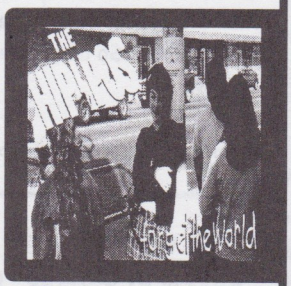
HENTCHMEN
"Campus Party" CD



Rulers of 1960's college frat parties. A regal lo-fi trio with guitar, organ and drums. Musically akin to the KINGSMEN, with songs about girls, cars and how much school sucks. No doubt many listeners will be able to relate. (JC)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

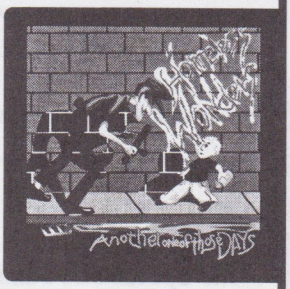
HIPPOS
"Forget The World" CD



Let's face it, most ska sucks, but this (astonishingly enough) blew me away. Mixing up the best elements of MADNESS and GREEN DAY, this is full of incredible hooks, great tuneage, the tightest sweetest vocal harmonies, and a genuinely skanking set of horns. Their gloriously reggaeified cover of the POLICE's "So Lonely" is a class act that Sting in his prime would've been proud of. Mandatory for any fan of the genre, and pretty much anyone else that loves a good pop song. The only downer is that they all thank God, which is hopefully something they'll grow out of. (RK)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

HOMELESS WONDERS
"Another One Of Those Days" CD



Snotty ska-core along the lines of LINK 80 or the MAD CADDIES. It showcases tight, energetic songs about teenage trials and tribulations, but nothing I would ever listen to twice. I'm sure they get a great big pit going at their local shows. (JC)

(Suburban Home/1750 30th Street #365/Boulder, CO 80301)

HOOKERS
"Satan's Highway" CD



Despite the satanic, dirthead gimmick these guys insist on pursuing, the music's basically that southern-fried, macho man style of the punk and the rock. I know a lot of people are really into this whole ANTISEEN scene, but I can't figure out why. Everything fun and endearing and dynamic about rock 'n' roll and punk rock gets steamrolled by throaty vocals and bluesy guitar progressions. This is not rock 'n' roll. This is fuckin' garbage. (RF)

(Scooch Pooch/323 Broadway E. #405/Seattle, WA 98102)

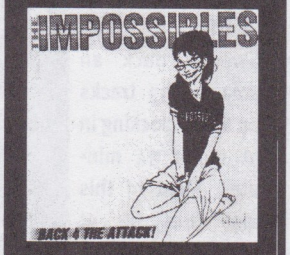
IDIOTS/JACK SAINTS
split CD



It's kind of amusing how the IDIOTS intersperse all the speaking bits from the first CRUCIFUCKS record inbetween their songs, and probably the best thing about their 'side' of the CD. Like the JACK SAINTS they play dirty, grungy, speedy punk rock They want to sound like an amphetamine-driven STOOGES and MC5, but the JACK SAINTS pull it off better. That's not necessarily saying that much. (RK)

(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street, #302/SF, CA 94107)

IMPOSSIBLES
"Back 4 The Attack" CD



Total ska/indie rock horseshit with plenty of WEEZER influence, and the result is a really nasty musical stool. This is radio-friendly 90's teen-oriented product, in other words music for people who don't really like music. Spend your lunch money on something else, kids, 'cause this definitely ain't worth your time. (RF)

Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

INDECISION
"Most Precious Blood" LP/CD



The liner notes of this CD warn of the marginalization of hardcore through categorizing it into various subgenres, but unfortunately I'm going to have to do so in in order to provide an accurate description. Interesting and inventive "metal" hardcore with plenty of chugga-chugga drops and harmonized guitar riffs (as well as a girl on guitar, which is something you don't see too often in hardcore). There are some great lyrics here; they're sort of abstract but with the common theme of "my soul's in anguish" running throughout. Recommended. (JP)

(Exit/PO Box 263/New York, NY 10012)

INTIMATE FAGS
"Break the Back/Fake" 7"



A trademark Rip Off release, featuring a Japanese 77-style garage punk band blasting out two lo-fi punkers. Both have pogo-worthy tempos and cool repetitive choruses (especially "Fake"), but the guitars are kind of buried in the mix. And wow, a 2-color cover. Greg's starting to get positively slick. (JB)

(Rip Off/581 Maple Avenue/San Bruno, CA 94066)

JACOBITES
"God Save Us Poor Sinners" CD

An alternately sadness- and irony-laced, ever-so-slightly punkish r 'n' r outfit featuring Nikki Sudden from SWELL MAPS and a young guitarist who reminds one of Keith Richards. Most of the songs are slow- to mid-tempo rockers with plaintive vocals, fair hooks, emotive but dirty guitar

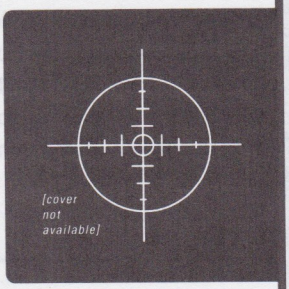
myself like it quite a bit (especially the STONES-ish title song, "So Unkind", the moody "Second Time Around", "Heartbreaks", and "Teenage Christmas"), but it's got a melancholy down-and-out feel that will surely appeal more to the worldly-wise than to the freshly-scrubbed. (JB)



(BOMP/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

JIKER
"An Eh For An Eh, A Toque For A Toque" CD

I guess the act of creation is cool, and should be encouraged. I'm sure these guys and their friends will really dig it, too, not to mention get a blast from all the in-jokes and references. For the rest of us, however, uninspired third generation ska-punk, despite its youthful energy, leaves a little to be desired. They're Canadian. They're not very good. The two are not necessarily connected. (RK)



(ELEVATOR MUSIC/PO BOX 1502/NEW HAVEN, CT 06505)

KICK STARTER
"Hangin' on B Street" 7" EP

This EP is dedicated to Stiv, Razzle, and Johnny Thunders, and is on the Pelado label, so I had high expectations for it. But even though KICK STARTER play the type of lowlife r 'n' r music that I normally love, the songs here lack some energy and intensity, and only "Feeling the Wine" and "Too Bad" really have memorable choruses and enough punch. Maybe the lackluster recording just doesn't do them justice. (JB)



(PELADO/521 W. WILSON #B202/COSTA MESA, CA 92627)

KITTY BADASS
"Once Cell At A Time" CD

By far the best asset this band has is the strong female vocalist. Unfortunately, the vocal stylings don't always quite mesh with the rest of the band's music. When it works, it's on. Faster poppy-punk, along the lines of TILT, or a less metallic JINGO DE LUNCH. (RK)



(ELEVATOR MUSIC/PO BOX 1502/NEW HAVEN, CT 06505)

KNUCKLEHEAD
"Little Boots" CD

KNUCKLEHEAD bring you more of that streetpunk sound that has become big in the last few years, and have obviously been influenced by the likes of the DROPKICK MURPHYS, RANCID, and the SWINGIN' UTTERS. They are really tight musically, and their songs have lots of hooks and harmonies, but overall they are lacking a bit in the originality department. Though not really a bad release, it just didn't floor me. Maybe it'll grow on me. (IR)



(FAR OUT/PO BOX 14361/FT. LAUDERDALE, FL. 33302)

KRIGSHOT
"Maktmissbrukare" CD

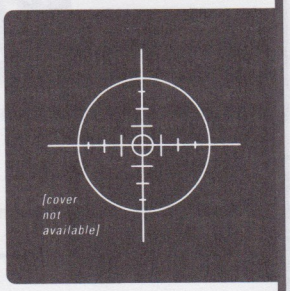
This monstrous trio from Sweden pack an amazing 33 tracks on a disc clocking in at under 34 minutes. Most of this just flies by at breakneck speeds, leaving no time to come up for air. They are probably an amazing live band, but after the 20th track the songs begin to blend together. KRIGSHOT is more pleasantly relentless when taken in small doses. (KB)



(SOUND POLLUTION/NO ADDRESS)

LIMECELL
"Pirate" LP

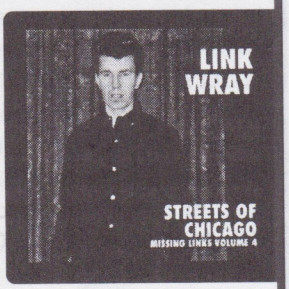
LIMECELL is one of those bands that, in a word, rips your balls off and nails them to the fucking wall. This is aggressive, attitude-laden, "fuck you!"-style punk rock, complete with big, tuff riffs, and great snarling vocals. LIMECELL classics such as "Crack Hooker", "Hot For the Slots", "Dumber", and "Rat Fink" are just a few of the great songs featured on this rockin' LP. So do yourself a favor and pick it up. (JW)



(SAFETY PIN/PO BOX 51241/28080 MADRID/SPAIN)

LINK WRAY
"Streets Of Chicago" CD

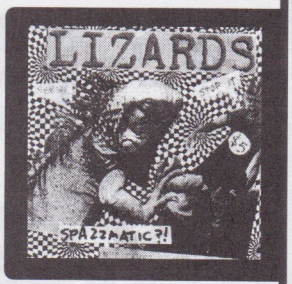
Link Wray is a rock 'n' roll god. He was one of the original truly sonic guitar players, along with DUANE EDDY and DICK DALE, but was much dirtier and more likely to punch you in the face in a barroom brawl. This is not the best collection of his that I've heard, since it contains a couple of sappy tracks that were no doubt unreleased for good reasons. But the bulk of the material is still pretty great, and includes alternate versions of hits like "Rumble", "Lillian". or "Mustang" (recorded here as "Bluebird"), demos, and live tracks. (JC)



(NORTON/P.O. BOX 646, COOPER STATION/NEW YORK, NY 10003)

LIZARDS
"The Spazzmatic Jumble-O-Tunes" CD

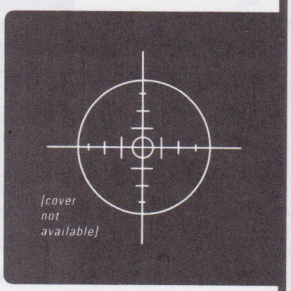
An utterly goofy and at times entertaining collection of garagey punk tunes by an amateurish, smarty-pants group of geeks. Some of the tracks are clever, others are kind of rockin' (like "A



Promise is a Promise"), and still others are kind of catchy (such as "Can't Cope" and "He's Crunchy"), but most are just downright silly, whether originals or covers. Strangely likeable, if overly cutesy and sometimes annoying. (JB)

(VERY SMALL, NO ADDRESS)

LOLI & THE CHONES
"Total Fucking Genocide" LP



To be honest I thought it would be impossible for LOLI and her vatos to duplicate the quality of their amazing debut LP, but "Total Fucking Genocide" is every bit as fabulous. Once again we have a 77-type garage punk record chock full of raw guitar power, super snotty male/female vocals, and hilarious "adolescent" lyrics. "Everybody Hates You", "Stink Bomb", "I Hate You Jocks", "Rumble in My Pants", and "Just Scream" are all killer songs. Punk rock just doesn't get any better than this. (JB)

(REPENT/1120 S. ORME AVENUE/BOYLE HEIGHTS, CA 90023)

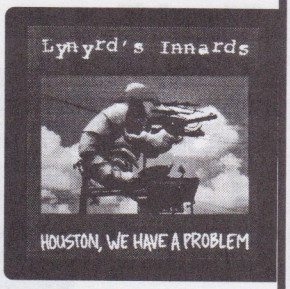
LOWER CLASS BRATS
"Rather Be Hated Than Ignored" CD



The BRATS have come up with an ass-whupping 12-song Oi gem here, what with its super heavy production, sledgehammer drums, loud buzzing guitars, and amazingly catchy background choruses. My faves are "Who Wrote the Rules", "Do It Again", "Background Music", and "Ultra Violence", but there's not really a single duff song. The only oddities are the occasional unwelcome piano tinkling and the disjuncture between the band's "Clockwork Orange" imagery and aggro lyrics and their genuine niceness on a personal level. What's up with that? (JB)

(GMM/PO BOX 15234/ATLANTA, GA 30333)

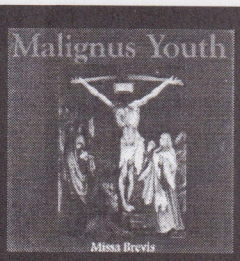
LYNYRD'S INNARDS
"Houston, We Have A Problem" 7" EP



Driving indie-rock with some cool songs. They sound like a SUPERCHUNK or MEICES type of band. I guess it's above average for this particular style, if that's what you're into. (JC)

(HARMLESS/1437 W. HOOD/CHICAGO, IL 60660)

MALIGNUS YOUTH
"Missa Brevis" CD



Christian punk? "I believe in one god, the father, almighty maker of heaven and earth." Yuck! In my opinion there is absolutely no room for religion in punk rock, but then this isn't really punk. They start off with a little taste of early 80's SoCal skate rock, skim the surface of some bad speed metal, and then jump into some crappy ska-style guitar work, all of which is bad. Get back to church before it's too late, Y2K is coming. (IR)

(YOUTH INC./PO BOX 65802/TUCSON, AZ 85728)

MAN IS THE BASTARD
"Discography" LP



Taking two previous split 12 inches and making them into one is not much of a "Discography" to me. I guess they must have had a good reason, but there's nothing new here for fans of the band. If this is your first experience, MAN IS THE BASTARD is a heavy-hitting crustcore band with lots of cool effects and sparse growling vocals. Throw NEUROSIS and NO MEANSNO together and give them a hand full of Quaaludes, and you'll get an idea of the effect this band has on me. (JC)

(DEEP SIX/NO ADDRESS)

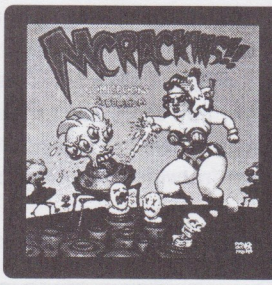
MC5
"Starship" CD



This is a live CD recorded at Sturgis Armory in June of 1968. Unfortunately, I'm only halfway through "Kick Out The Jams" and they're already starting to lose me. This disc suffers from poor levels and poor production, which is always a risk one takes when putting out a live record. Despite the fact that it was recorded during the "prime" of the MC5, it probably isn't the CD you'd want to pick up if you hope to hear this great rock 'n' roll band at their best. For serious collectors only. (JW)

(ALIVE/TOTAL ENERGY/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

MCRACKINS
"Comicbooks and Bubblegum" CD



Lately at work we've been making a lot of jokes about our Canadian employees. I dunno...they're such nice folks and they're such alcoholics, and they say "eh" and "aboat" all the time and they hosted the 1988 Winter Olympics with the cool luge. Three of them dressed as eggs and a chicken got together and made a pretty solid, mid-tempo pop punk record with a bit of a RAMONES-y feel to it. They even wrote a song in tribute to Akebono, the renowned sumo wrestler. It's one of those heart-warmingly silly records that could only come from the same country that produced Dave Foley and "The New Red Green Show". (DGJ)

(COLDFRONT/PO BOX 8345/BERKELEY, CA 94707)

SHITLIST

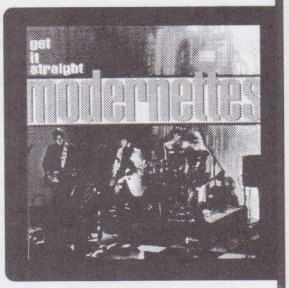
MELT BANANA
"Charlie" CD



Heavy, industrial, psychedelic mindfuck music with a bitchin' bass player. The esoteric drug-drenched lyrics are fun to try and decipher, but I'll bet you $5 that you can't follow them all. Take ATARI TEENAGE RIOT, the BOREDOMS, and BLACK FLAG, stick them in a blender, set it on frappe, and freak out. (JC)

(Revolver/2525 16th Street/San Francisco, CA 94103)

MODERNETTES
"Get It Straight" CD



A rerelease of selections from records by Vancouver's punky popsters the MODERNETTES, including some unreleased live material. After listening to their stuff again for the first time in a long time, I am still of the opinion that they were a very uneven band. They did manage to produce some really catchy uptempo and mid-tempo originals (like "Barbra", "Teen City", and "Won't Have to Worry") and some cool cover songs, but overall their own songs had neither big enough hooks nor sufficient rockin' punch to really bowl anyone over (notwithstanding Mary's fab gams). (JB)

(Zulu/1869 W. 4th Avenue/Vancouver, BC V6J ZM4/CANADA)

MY SO-CALLED BAND
"President Lust" CD



A pretty dull one here. There's one decent rocking song ("Propped Up") about the problems of a trailer trash couple, and one kinda cool NO MEANS NO-sounding song. The rest of it is lame, with an awful cheesy Bill Clinton and Monica theme going that just makes the CD embarrassing to have in your collection. (JC)

(Yessa, Inc./PO Box 31725/Charlotte, NC 28231-1725)

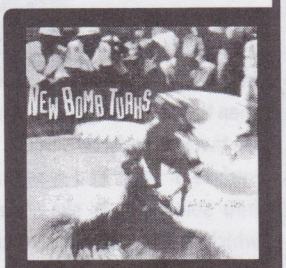
NEW AMERICAN MOB
"Liberty" CD



Rising from the ashes of the SPENT IDOLS, this new San Diego Band stumble than the late, great IDOLS, and decidedly less lo-fi. You can still hear that Class Of '77 thing, but it ain't so by-the-books here. Crunchy PISTOL-ish rockers mix with neat covers of JERRY LEE and, oddly enough, AEROSMITH. Their drummer, Kate, gets my vote as the Mo Tucker of the new millennium. (JD)

(Diskoid/1935C Friendship Drive/El Cajon, CA 92020)

NEW BOMB TURKS
"At Rope's End"



More mean-sounding punk 'n' roll from Ohio's favorite sons. I initially expected to find a slicker sound than normal on "At Rope's End", but although there's nothing here as manic as certain songs on their debut LP, this one is nevertheless dominated by raw-sounding, snotty rants with primitivo guitars. I could, however, do without slow songs like "Bolan's Crash" and the occasional annoying sax and piano fills. (JB)

(Epitaph/2798 Sunset Blvd/Los Angeles, CA 90026)

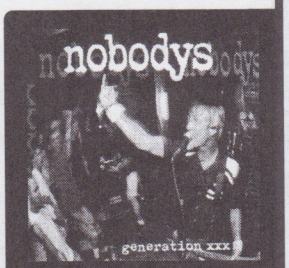
NEW RACE
"The First And The Last" CD

This is the CD reissue of a one-off album by a gaggle of former punk rock superstars, NEW RACE. which was three parts RADIO BIRDMAN (Deniz Tek, Warick Gilbert, and Rob Younger), one part STOOGES (Ron Asheton), and one part MC5 (Dennis Thompson). It contains a variety of live tracks , mostly cover versions of songs recorded by their previous bands. Overall this is a good record that's not only reminiscent of the members' antecedent bands, but also of another post-BIRDMAN project, the NEW CHRISTS. (JW)



(Alive/Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

NOBODY'S
"Generation XXX" CD



Sneering amped-up p-rock from a "porno punk" band that, according to their own boast, was "born to destroy" rock 'n' roll. The problem here, as in the case of the PISTOLS, is that you can't realistically pretend to be destroying r 'n' r as long as you're producing an appealing variant of it, and these smartasses churn out a pretty good if not terribly original variant with satirical lyrics, lots of insults, and some decent tunes (as exemplified by "Fat Hookers" and "The Jerk"). The NOBODY'S should undoubtedly be seen live to appreciate their full impact. (JB)

(Hopeless/PO Box 7495/Van Nuys, CA 91409)

NO ONE'S VICTIM
"Just Another Young Punk Band" 7" EP



On first listening I'd say that NO ONE'S VICTIM is probably one of the best Cali street-punk bands. All the songs have lots of drive (especially "Working Class Hero"), great singalong choruses (especially "'77"), and good hooks (especially (Out Tonite"). None too original, but when p-rock sounds this good who really cares? (JB)

(Radio/PO Box 1452/Sonoma, CA 95476)

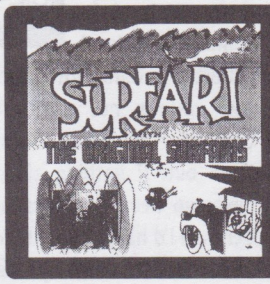
ONE KING DOWN
"God Loves, Man Kills" LP/CD



O.K.D. is back with a new singer in the line-up dishing out more of that metallic hardcore that everyone loves. Nine tracks of grinding guitar dissonance blended with tricky time signatures in the vein of DEADGUY. Grab your hooded sweatshirts and head gaskets. (JP)

(Equal Vision/PO Box 14/Hudson, NY 12534)

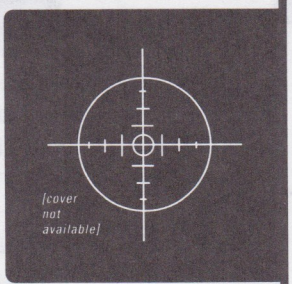
ORIGINAL SURFARIS
"Surfari With The Original Surfaris" LP



These are the ORIGINAL SURFARIS, damn it, not the other SURFARIS who did that "Wipeout" song that all of you have heard so many times. Legal problems led to the "original" part, also causing much trouble that helped to keep this band relatively obscure. Cool classic-sounding surf music, including great standards like "Pipeline" plus a handful of originals. This would be good stuff to do the "monkey" or the "mashed potato" to. (JC)

(Surfari/no address)

OXYMORON
"Fuck the Nineties...Here's Our Noise" LP/CD



A much better than average British streetpunk record. It's filled with the by now de rigueur melodic mid-tempo stomps, guitar punch, and soccer-style choruses, not to mention yobbo "no future" lyrics. What lifts it above the pack is the actual songwriting, since most of the cuts stick in your craw after one or two listens. "I wanna be a dirty punk", indeed. (JB)

(GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA 30333)

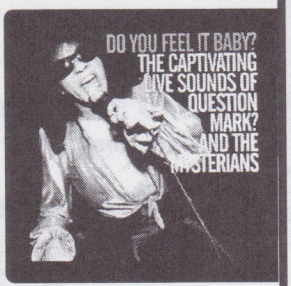
PUD
"I'm The Shark" CD



I'm sure these guys really dig the early DAMNED and the CLASH. And the singer sure wishes he could've been born as BILLY IDOL. They're not bad. The CD is well-played, with a good chunky production. It's just kind of nondescript, bland, and...well...sort of nothing. (RK)

(Recess/PO Box 1112/Torrance, CA 90505)

QUESTION MARK ? AND THE MYSTERIANS
"Do you feel it, baby? The Captivating sounds of..." CD



One of the 1960's premier garage rock space cowboys returns—did he ever really leave?—with his original backing band fully intact. This CD was recorded live at Coney Island High in New York, in front of what seems to have been a big, lively crowd. 19 tracks of organ-driven garage rock provided them with their money's worth. Always in a league (if not a planet) of their own, no comparison really gives them justice. A smokin' set by a band that really seems to have a love for what they do. (JC)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

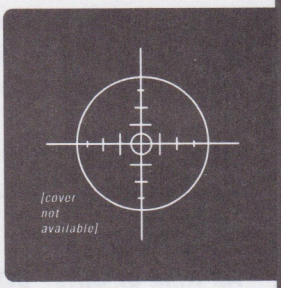
QUESTION MARK & THE MYSTERIONS
"Sally Go Round the Roses/It's Not Easy" 7"

The good: one of my all time favorite 60's bands is back doin' shit in the 90s, and it fuckin' rules! Question Mark's voice sounds as sweet as it did 30 years ago. The bad: I didn't see them live due to my stupid boycotting reformed bands policy. The ugly: get on your knees, stupid motherfuckers, and worship the mighty QUESTION MARK & THE MYSTERIONS! (GL)



(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/NY, NY 10276)

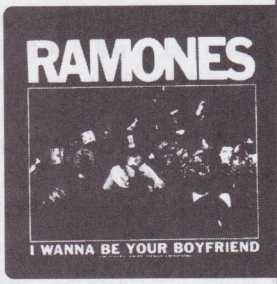
QUINCY PUNX
"Nutso Smasho" CD



Am I missing something here? G.B.H.'s first 12" was awesome. After that, they went downhill real fast. What does that say about their legion of wannabes? Some of the in-between song clips are pretty funny. (RK)

(Recess/PO Box 1112/Torrance, CA 90505)

RAMONES
"I Wanna Be Your Boyfriend/ Judy is a Punk" 7"



A re-release of original demo versions of two of the RAMONES' classic tracks. The most striking thing about listening to them in 1999 is how slow they seem, whereas when I first heard the band 23 years ago I was frankly amazed by how fast they played. That's how years and years of thrash ("hardcore"), grindcore, and speed metal have (sadly) transformed our perspectives. (JB)

(Norton/Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

SHITLIST

RANCID VAT
"Iconoclastic Icons" CD



What we have here is a thoroughly obnoxious example of "white trash" artpunk, seemingly a contradiction in terms. However, to paraphrase Jim Goad (who also wrote the liner notes for this CD), these are intelligent "rednecks", the most "dangerous" element in contemporary American society. Musically, it's way too arty to suit my purist r 'n' r tastes, but the production is primitive and lyrically it's right up any trashmeister's alley, as evidenced by "Puke on My Face", "Screwed and Tatooed", and "Hatred is Sacred". (JB)

(Baloney Shrapnel/PO Box 6504/Phoenix, AZ 85005)

REAL KIDS
"All Kind of Girls" CD



Absolutely essential reissue from Norton records of the REAL KIDS first (and only with original line-up) album. In case you were born yesterday, they were a stellar Boston band that played some of the finest hook-laden rock 'n' roll of all time. This album features 9 originals, including their sublime hits "All Kindsa Girls", "Solid Gold", and "Taxi Boys", as well as covers of BUDDY HOLLY, GENE VINCENT and EDDIE COCHRAN songs that are amped up in the indelible REAL KIDS style. (JC)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

REAZIONE
"L'altra faccia della Riviera" CD

Half of this 8-song Oi release by non-racist Italian skins, including two members of KLASSE KRIMINALE, is the real deal. Anyone who's ever been to Rimini (especially during the late summer) can sympathize with the lyrics on "Rimini Brucia", and the first four tracks are all characterized by strong vocals (plus a guest appearance of Rudy from DIOXINA), loud yet tasteful guitars, and a nice chunky production. Although the other tracks are live or more akin to novelty songs, this is nonetheless worth your attention. (JB)



(Passatore/c/o Elisabetta Tonti/Via Simoni 2/47037 Rimini/ITALY)

REGISTRATORS
"Terminal Boredom" CD



Japan's REGISTRATORS are primarily an uptempo 77-style garage punk band, perhaps with a hint of amped-up TEENGENERATE trashiness. They've got enough primitiveness to appeal, and some of the individual tracks are terrific ("Watch TV", "Killer Man", and "Normal"), but the guitar sound is way too thin and the production is overly trebly. (JB)

(Rip Off/581 Maple Avenue/San Bruno, CA 94066)

RETARD BEATERS
"Pooling Jane" 7" EP

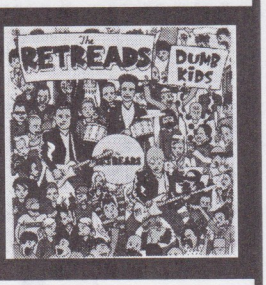


The good: fast Florida punk rock kids who sound like they're havin' fun. The bad: a horrible cover. It took me 15 minutes to figure out what the band's name was. The ugly: I'm kind of unsure about this one. Just buy it and decide for yourself, OK? (GL)

(No Idea/PO Box 14636/Gainesville, FL 32604)

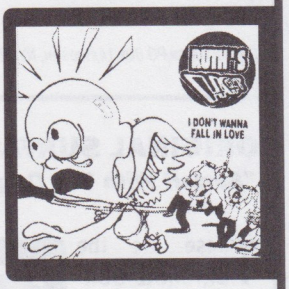
RETREADS
"Dumb Kids" CD

What's up with Skull Duggery, finding all these great RAMONES-influenced pop punk bands that like to spell out words during their songs? This one's another winner. It's edited and mastered by members of SCREACHING WEASEL, which is all you losers probably need to know to make you want to buy it. At least you'll be a loser with a good record. (BAM)



(Skull Duggery/77 Scituate Avenue/Scituate, MA 02066)

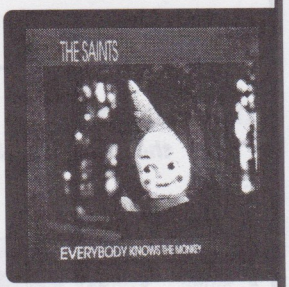
RUTH'S HAT
"I Don't Wanna Fall in Love" 7" EP



This is an above average pop punk offering that has considerable appeal (despite the throwaway BOBBY DARIN cover). Given their penchant for combining loud, distorted guitars with "beach" melodies, RUTH'S HAT sounds not unlike the "Grow Up"-era QUEERS—you know, before Lookout wimped them out. If nothing else, these guys should never go near a professional recording studio, because I'd hate to see their fine songs on the A-side ruined by a slick, gutless production. (JB)

(SPG/PO Box 15076/San Rafael, CA 94915)

SAINTS
"Everybody Knows The Monkey" CD

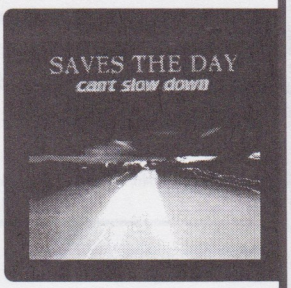


The SAINTS are a legendary Australian punk band whose '77 anthems I love, but their new album, appearing 22 years later, is really bad. This new release features pathetically overproduced alterna-rock suitable for mainstream radio, somewhere along the lines of the GOO GOO DOLLS or some other lame band. (JC)

(Amsterdam/P.O. Box 862558/Los Angeles, CA 90086)

SAVES THE DAY
"Can't Slow Down" CD

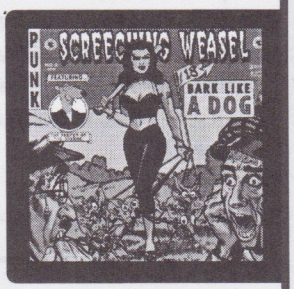
First things first: all of you sensitive, hooded sweatshirt types out there who are still mourn-



ing the untimely demise of the mighty LIFETIME will find solace in this record. Second things second: this record sounds amazingly close to where LIFETIME left off with "Jersey's Best Dancers". Third things third: this might even be BETTER than anything that Lifetime ever put out — the vocals are smoother and more melodic, and lyrically SAVES THE DAY definitely stands up. Highly reccomended. (DGJ)

(Equal Vision/PO Box 14/Hudson, NY 12534)

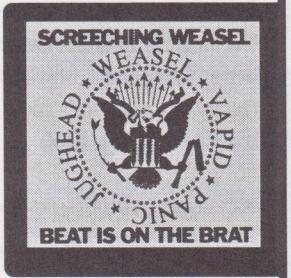
SCREECHING WEASEL
"Bark Like a Dog" CD



I haven't really liked SW for years, in part because I hold them responsible for generating an endless flood of generic-sounding copycat pop punk bands of the twerpiest sort. The fact that this LP was on Fat made me even less inclined to ever listen to it, which turned out to be a huge mistake. This may be the best ever SW release, what with its humungous hooks, super heavy guitar sound, and crunchy mid-tempo power. I'm ashamed to admit that I can't get the choruses of "You Blister My Paint", "Get Off My Back", and "Stupid Girl" out of my head. (JB)

(Fat/PO Box 193690/San Francisco, CA 94119)

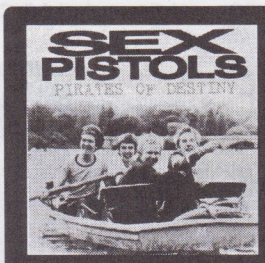
SCREECHING WEASEL
"Beat Is On The Brat" CD



Two great tastes that for some reason don't quite taste great together, this is Panic Button's reissue of SW's cover of the first RAMONES record with the "Formula 27" EP tacked onto the end. Anyone who knows me is aware that I love SW, and the RAMONES are, well they're the RAMONES for Chrissakes! But this record isn't that interesting, to be honest. On the liner notes Ben admits that the CD was basically released for SW completists, and that's the only way I can recommend this record. They even sound more like the RAMONES than the RIVERDALES, or for that matter, the late model RAMONES did. (DGJ)

(Panic Button/PO Box 148010/Chicago, IL 60614)

SEX PISTOLS
"Pirates of Destiny" CD



The good: these are some of the PISTOLS' earliest sessions (done with Chris Spedding), and are very primitive recordings made without adding 17 guitar tracks. Pretty amazing stuff. The bad: are you kiddin'? This is one of the few good records I got to review. The ugly: this is for SEX PISTOLS fanatics, or for those who want to hear different versions of their fave punk rock songs. (GL)

(NO ADDRESS)

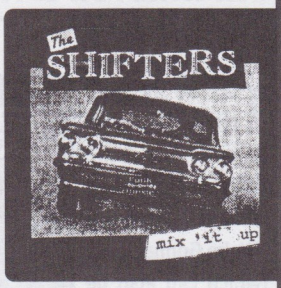
SEX PISTOLS
"We Have Cum For Your Children, Wanted: The Goodman Tapes"



Back in print, the PISTOLS' Goodman tapes are a worthy addition to the collection of any hardcore fan or simply anyone interested in the history of punk. It's a great companion piece to Jon Savage's brilliant history of the PISTOLS and early British punk, "England's Dreaming." Included are the infamous Bill Grundy interview, which caused headlines all over England and ultimately led to the words "A&M" being tacked to the end of "EMI." This is a real recorded history of the Pistols, from early versions of "EMI" (originally entitled "Unlimited Supply") and "Pretty Vacant," to a live version of "No Fun" from their first and last American tour. Upon putting this on for the first time I was immediately compelled to consume vast quantities of Rolling Rock and strap on my guitar. I hope you will be too. (DGJ)

(Creativeman/3619 Motor Drive, Suite 280/Los Angeles, CA 90034)

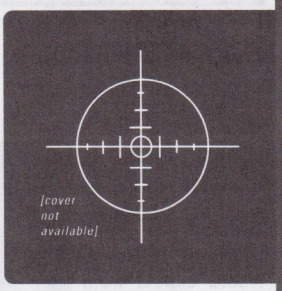
SHIFTERS
Mix it Up" 7" EP



The SHIFTERS were (until their recent breakup) among the best of the current crop of NorCal punk bands. Why? Because unlike so many of their peers they wrote melodic 78-style songs with great hooks, played them with genuine enthusiasm, and recorded them in a properly "unprofessional" fashion. This EP captures all the above qualities, but they were louder and even catchier live. (JB)

(Radio/PO Box 1452/Sonoma, CA 95476)

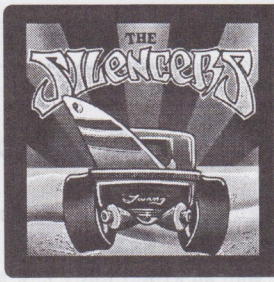
SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN
"Appetite Of Kings" CD



A weak, weedy production certainly doesn't do this band any favors. Neither does the insipid songwriting, or third-rate Biafra-esque vocal inflections. A bad version of plodding early 80s Britpunk with wannabe mob choruses. If this is what became of terrace chants, no wonder they made soccer stadiums all-seaters. (RK)

(Elevator Music/PO Box 1502/New Haven, CT 06511)

SILENCERS
"Bleach Pit" CD



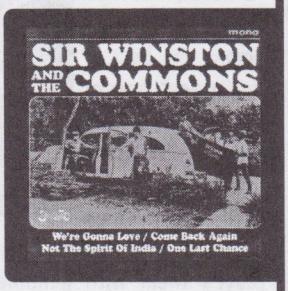
The good: it has a hot looking 60's babe on the inside sleeve. The bad: the outside sleeve is a silly race car motif; they should have switched the blond for the car. The ugly: straight-up surf that I'm sick to death of.

SHITLIST

Bale. (GL)

(Alive/Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

SIR WINSTON & THE COMMONS
"We're Gonna Love" 7" EP



This be the shit, maaan. It contains the Indianapolis band's most famous song, "We're Gonna Love" (which can also be found on the Soma "Big Hits of Mid-America" double CD), with its superfuzz guitar riff, irresistably catchy chorus, and piercing primitive guitar breaks. Also included are the haunting and somber "Come Back Again", a psych punk track with tambourine and fuzz guitars, and a moody folk punk number. Genuflect before the coolness of the Sundazed label. (JB)

(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

SMARTBOMB
"Surgery" CD



Fairly formulaic melodic hardcore, which is pretty much what one would expect from California new schoolers. This is not bad—it's nice, and tight, and has lots of vocal harmonies—but to these ears it only really kicks in when they stray away from the LAGWAGON/PENNYWISE pastures and approach the more edgy, anguished fields of mid-period HÜSKER DÜ. Unfortunately, that only occurs on a couple of tracks. (RK)

(Creativeman/8610 Farley Way/Fair Oaks, CA 95268)

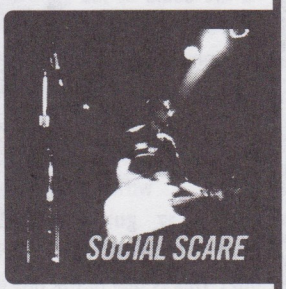
SMILE
"Girl Crushes Boy" CD

I usually don't like wuss music, but this CD actually did it for me. Maybe it had something to do with an ex-BIG DRILL CAR member being in the band. Great heavy pop, stuck somewhere between the BEATLES and early WEEZER, with a touch of DRIVE LIKE JEHU thrown in for good measure. Worth checking out. (BAM).



(Cargo/4901-906 Morena Blvd./San Diego, CA 92117)

SOCIAL SCARE
"Sound Formula" LP/CD



Fast, semi-melodic, political tunes from Berkley (Michigan, that is). I can see kids burning flags in their bedrooms to this. The artwork consists of a series of black-and-white live shots that are indistinguishable from one another, but hey, fuck artwork! (JP)

(Radical/77 Bleecker Street #C2-21/New York, NY 10012)

SONICS
"Boom" LP



A timely reissue of their second album. Great raw slabs of revved-up thunder soul from the Pacific Northwest's finest garage band, a band with much underground adulation. And deservedly so. This release also includes some of the most extensive and entertaining liner notes I have ever seen on a record. (JC)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

SONICS
"Don't Believe in Christmas/Santa Clause" 7"



Why am I reviewing Christmas records in March? This is an anti-Christmas record with songs of failed holidays and Santa's shortcomings. Side A is a great rave-up rocker, whereas sideB is groovier with an almost dead on "Hang on Sloopy" sound to it. (JC)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

SONICS
"Here Are The Sonics" LP



The SONICS were a thing of pure rock 'n' roll beauty, and with a soul to their music that can give you the chills. "Here are The Sonics" is a reissue of their first and best record. It contains blistering originals like "Strychnine", "Psycho" and "The Witch", a bunch of ripping covers, and even three Christmas songs. A big thanks are owed to Norton for the detailed liner notes on this and "Boom", both of which provide you with a great rock 'n' roll history lesson. (JC)

(Norton/PO Box 646, Cooper Station/New York, NY 10003)

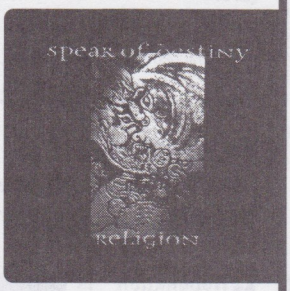
SORE LOSER
"Is Out To Save The World" CD



Hand on heart skate-ish pop punk from Texas. SORE LOSER walk a fine line between emo and BAD RELIGION-esque skatepunk. This is pretty good stuff, although the music could benefit from a better mix. The liner notes include a little prose piece about each song; a dedication or mini-essay, which is a nice touch. Both the written pieces and the lyrics are intelligently written and moving. The music is solid and catchy, but it's dying for a better recording, which as these guys gain momentum will surely come. The five-color cover is pretty neat, too. (DGJ)

(Act Your Age/3244 Locke Lane/Houston, TX 77019)

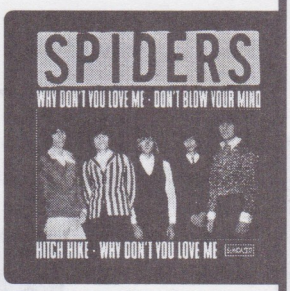
SPEAR OF DESTINY
"Religion" LP/CD



I don't know why I was given this to review, since fans of Kirk Brandon will probably have a conniption fit over my brusque treatment of his music, but here goes. Kirk Brandon, the front man of SPEAR OF DESTINY, used to head THEATRE OF HATE in the early 80s, a cacophonous post-punk project that enjoyed some popularity. Now he's back with this, SPEAR OF DESTINY's first full-length in ten years. This is basically grungy, tribal avant-rock balladry (!), definitely not my cup of tea, but it's okay for what it is. Maybe he can get on the BLACK SABBATH reunion tour. (JP)

(Amsterdamned/PO Box 862558/Los Angeles, CA 90086-2558)

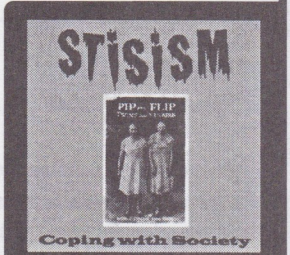
SPIDERS
"Why Don't You Love Me" 7" EP



What we have here are the two extraordinarily rare mid-60's singles by the SPIDERS, whose members later constituted the core of the ALICE COOPER band, gathered together on one new 7". It contains two (vocal and instrumental) versions of the boppin' title song, a mediocre cover of "Hitch Hike", and the song which really stands out and makes this EP a must-have record—the snooty, psych punk classic "Don't Blow Your Mind", which features Michael Bruce on rhythm guitar along with a killer solo by Glen Buxton. (JB)

(Sundazed/PO Box 85/Coxsackie, NY 12051)

STISISM
"Coping with Society" CD



This is an outstanding melodic punk rock LP, and Man's Ruin is to be congratulated for re-releasing it in CD form. Both thud punk bands incapable of writing a decent song and sissified pop punk groups unable to muster any aggressiveness or guitar muscle would benefit enormously from being forced to listen to STISISM, "Clockwork Orange"-style if necessary. "Coping" is the very model of a hook-filled sonic assault in the best punk rock tradition. (JB)

(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street #302/San Francisco, CA 94107)

STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS
"Overdrive" CD



Piledriving punk 'n' roll with an aggressive edge, catchy songs, a bad attitude, and a sense of humor. Most of the songs are uptempo rockers with an in-your-face appeal, but they also show off their "sensitive" side on a couple of maudlin, junkie-speed numbers (such as "Peppermint"). Sometimes it veers a bit into "professional punk" slickness, in terms of both the production and some of the vocal stylings, but in general it really rocks out (as, e.g., in "Freak Out Man", "Little Tokyo", "Turn Me Down", and "Disease"). (JB)

(Alive/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

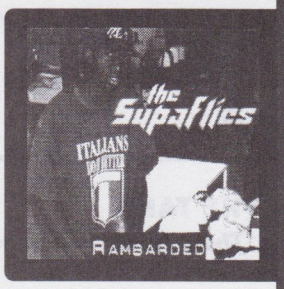
SUICIDE KINGS
"Teenage Disaster" CD



As a rabid (pre-Epitaph) HUMPERS fan who also loved the first LP by their previous incarnation, I was naturally excited to stumble across this new comp of unreleased SUICIDE KINGS tracks. And it was well worth the wait. The S. KINGS were a glammer and slightly crunchier DOLLS-like version of the mighty HUMPERS, and on this they offer up four amazingly great studio tracks, four raw demo versions (including the killer "Clusterfuck"), and four crudely-recorded live songs. When I'm listening to the spectacular "3-D Glasses", I feel like I've already died and gone to r 'n' r heaven along with Stiv, Johnny, and Paula Pierce. Fuckin' A+++ (JB)

(Sympathy/4450 California Place #303/Long Beach, CA 90807)

SUPAFLIES
"Rambarded" LP/CD



Ska punk, ska punk, ska punk. I think everybody knows what this sounds like. If you favor LESS THAN JAKE, you'll like these guys. This is better than your average ska punk band, since there are some interesting harmonies and the lyrics aren't too bad, but I guess this one's up to you. (JP)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

SUPER HI-FIVE
"Strength Control Action" CD



Hi-energy emo/skate punk in a LIFETIME or PROPAGANDHI style. They are good at what they do, but it's certainly not something that I would listen to all the time. The introspective lyrics are good, but hopefully they'll find something else to sing about on future releases. It got pretty tiring listening to "I'm trying to find a way", "I wonder why", and "When I look at myself". (JC)

(Creep/252 E. Market Street, Suite 220/West Chester, PA 19381)

SVART SNÖ
"Bellyache and Acideyes" CD



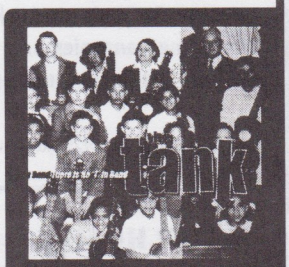
A collection of material from the Swedish metallic-thrash gods. It includes some comp and EP tracks from their ten year run ('87-97), along with the only demo of UR FUNKTION, the band that metamorphasized into SVART SNÖ. The Scandinavians took early DISCHARGE and G.B.H. to heart, minced them up, and proceeded to crank them out with an added

SHITLIST

to start using words like "blistering", "raging", and "shredding" to describe their music. I always thought Finland's RIISTETYT were the finest exponents of this genre, but SVART SNÖ undoubtedly gave it a good fucking welly. (RK)

(Grand Theft Audio/501 West Glenoaks Blvd., Suite 313/Glendale, CA 91202)

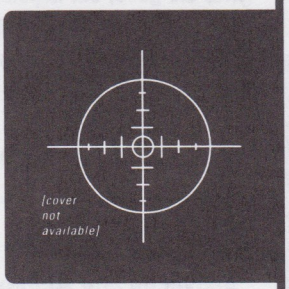
THE TANK
"There Is No 'I' In Band" CD



A fairly pedestrian melodic hardcore effort. It's excellently executed and boasts a crystal production, but lacks sufficient spark to stand out amonst the huge plethora of SoCal-style bands these days. By no means a terrible record, but merely one more patented item from the production line that has already ground out LAGWAGON, FACE TO FACE, and their ilk. (RK)

(Dr. Strange/PO Box 7000-117/Alta Loma, CA 91701)

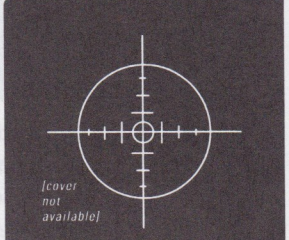
TEDIO-BOYS
"Bad Trip" CD



Lo-fi garagesque wish-we-could-be-rockabilly with atonal vocals. I sure hope BILL HALEY is squirming in his grave. (RK)

(Elevator Music/PO Box 1502/New Haven, CT 06511)

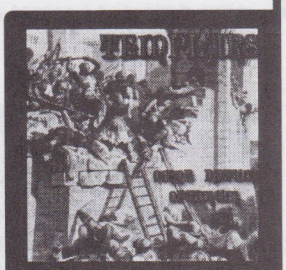
TEENAGE POWER MOTHER FUCKER
"Kick It" CD



The good: a fucked-up sounding GUITAR WOLF wannabe Japanese band. It sounds like my mom recorded this off of her boom box. The bad: see above. The ugly: the Japanese have a way of blatantly ripping off each other's bands, and this is no exception. Buy GUITAR WOLF's CDs instead. (GL)

(Nice & Neat/PO Box 14177/Minneapolis, MN 55414)

TEMPLARS
"Omne Datum Optimum" CD



This CD has been in constant rotation since its arrival a few weeks ago. The TEMPLARS are no-nonsense street punk/Oi band in the style of BLITZ, SKREWDRIVER, and PETER & THE TEST TUBE BABIES. Stellar from start to finish, "Omne..." is chock full o' tuff and catchy skinhead anthems, including classics like "Boredom", "The Waiting Is Over", "They Don't Care", and "Victim". Buy this now. (JW)

(GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA 30333)

TOILET BOYS/DONNAS
split 7"



The TOILET BOYS are one of the best rock 'n' roll bands going right now. This one-sided single gives you a glimpse of the raw-edged rock that the TOILET BOYS bring to the table. Like almost any TOILET BOYS' release, this one is well worth picking up, and if they're coming to your town, don't even think about missing the show. (BAM)

(Lookout/PO Box 11374/Berkeley, CA 94712)

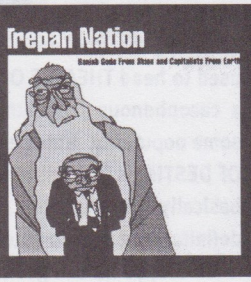
TRAITORS
"Dumb As Toast" CD



900-mph 4/4 aggression. The TRAITORS consist of members of NO EMPATHY, APOCALYPSE HOBOKEN, and a few other Chicagoans. The recording is by Steve Albini, so you know you can expect a real solid sound. Worth checking out. (BAM)

(Johan's Face/PO Box 479164/Chicago, IL 60647)

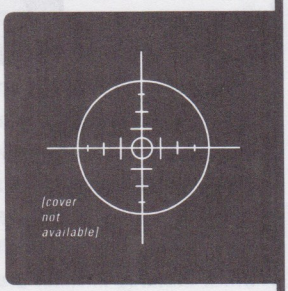
TREPAN NATION
"Banish The gods From The Skies and Capitalists from Earth" CD



"Trepanation" is the process of drilling a hole in your skull and bloodletting to achieve a higher consciousness. TREPAN NATION is a curious high-energy punk band from Chicago. They seem straight edge but are not preachy about it, and only one or two songs seem to deal with the subject at all. The lyrics in general are well-written and interesting, and combine good observations on society and personal stuff. Musically, they are a melodic hardcore band not unlike GOOD RIDDANCE or LIFETIME. (JC)

(Harmless/1437 West Hood/Chicago, IL 60660)

THE TROUBLE
"Nobody Laughs Anymore" CD



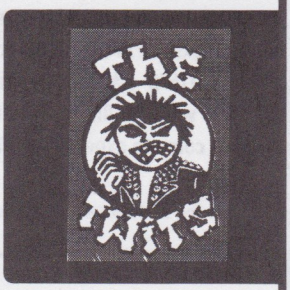
The TROUBLE have unleashed a furious full-length CD on GMM. This is fast, angry, in-your-face punk that sounds like a cross between hardcore and Oi, with Dave Smalley from early DAG NASTY on vocals. I'm kind of at a loss for description, since this makes me want to crash my fuckin' car. Boston hardcore has come full circle, with the TROUBLE calling the shots. Get yourself to the record store and pick it up. (IR)

(GMM/PO Box 15234/Atlanta, GA. 30333)

TWITS
"Family Man" CD

These kids do a pretty slick job of livin' by their own rules, tellin' authority where to stick it, and churning out some of the most awful, worth-

less gutter punk that I've ever heard. The irritating female lead vocals seem rather tolerable when juxtaposed to the (hilarious) deathmetal male back-ups. I dunno, man...I mean, I do remember being young and dumb and all about the "now" of punk, but I was never this fuckin' stupid. (RF)



(DIRTY/PO BOX 6869/GLENDALE, AZ 85312-6869)

UNISEX
"Deadlock" CD EP

Jeez, where do I start? This has tamborines, strange percussion instruments, and some shitty psychedelic underwater guitar sound that really got on my nerves. UNISEX try really hard to hit the mark on that 90's "alterna-dork" sound, but can't even pull that off. The last song unfortunately has a kind of "church choir" feel to it. Avoid this record at all costs. (IR)



(DOUBLE AGENT/PO BOX 400082/CAMBRIDGE, MA 02140)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Big Itch, vol. 6" LP

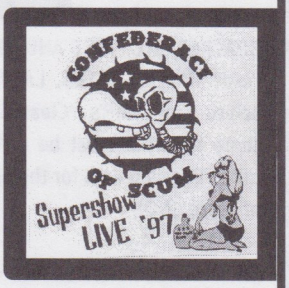
I snatched this record up because I have a big love for crazy old rock 'n' roll, novelty records, and records made by psychotics. You know, stuff that's so bad it is good. However, this collection is a big disappointment since it contains a bunch of really dull and boring tracks by people who just had no imagination. Maybe since this is volume 6, some of the earlier volumes were worth it. Worst of all is the crappy packaging job, which provides no information whatsoever about any of the artists (or even an address for the label). With a little background on these artists, you might at least have gotten an idea of where they were coming from when they recorded these novelties. (JC)



(MR. MANICOTTI/NO ADDRESS)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"COS Supershow '97 Live" CD

A live recording of the Confederacy of Scum's '97 Supershow, which featured LIMECELL, COCKNOOSE, ANTISEEN, RANCID VAT, HELLSTOMPER, and the ad hoc supergroup CONQUERER WORM. The recording is surprisingly clean (albeit not as loud as expected), and all of the music is predictably crude, vulgar, and tuneless. That isn't meant as a criticism, though. On this occasion I think LIMECELL and RANCID VAT's performances stood above the pack, although HELLSTOMPER's "Berkeley in a Box" may be the lyrical high point. (JB)



(BALONEY SHRAPNEL/PO BOX 6504/PHOENIX, AZ 85005)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"The Essential Pebbles Collection [vol. 1]" CD

A strange collection comprising both highlights from the first ten "Pebbles" LPs and an entire CD's worth of mostly unreleased tracks—all remastered to excellent effect by Lee Joseph. The "highlights" disc contains classic 60's punkers by the GRAINS OF SAND, the HAUNTED, the GENTLEMEN, the LOST AGENCY, the STARFIRES, and lots of other great garage stuff, but not—amazingly—mandatory cuts like the AVENGERS' "Be a Cave Man". The other CD includes a few outstanding tracks (e.g., those by the MISSING LYNX, the ROOSTERS, the MALIBUS ["I'm in Love"], and the astounding OTHER HALF), but also quite a bit of filler. (JB)



(AIP/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Exitos A Go Go" CD

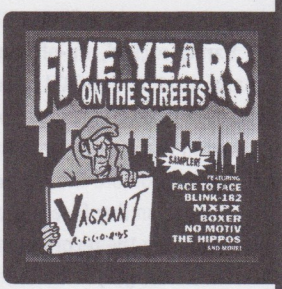
A mixed bag of 60's garage bands from Mexico, South America, and Spain's Canary Islands. I was frankly expecting the worst, but this turned out to be a fairly decent record. None of the songs are blistering punkers, but neither are they mainly silly covers of well-known Anglo-American songs, as is often the case with other "Hispanic" comps. "Exitos" only contains a few actual covers ("My Little Red Book", "Lost Woman", "Time Won't Let Me", etc.), although there are pilfered riffs and melodies galore (e.g., on RUBEN Y SUS EMOCIONES' and LOS HITTERS' songs). My fave bands, which have fuzz guitars, cool melodies, or a rockin' beat, are by LOS SICODELICOS, LA TROPA LOCA, LOS SHAKERS, LOS CANARIOS, LOS YAKI, and LOS DOLTONS. (JB)



(AIP/PO BOX 7112/BURBANK, CA 91510)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Five Years On The Streets" CD

A Vagrant Records sampler. A rather pleasing collection of pop and melodic SoCal hardcare, with a hint of ska. It Includes unreleased tracks from BLINK 182, the HIPPOS and AUTOMATIC 7. Given that the rest is pretty much a "best-of" the label—let's face it, few labels with more than two braincells, or a half-decent release, are going to put the filler tracks from each record on their sampler—and presuming that one digs bands like FACE TO FACE, UNWRITTEN LAW, the GOTO-HELLS, J-CHURCH, BOXER, FAR, NUCLEAR SATURDAY, and DOWN BY LAW, this is an excellent collection.



(VAGRANT/2118 WILSHIRE BLVD. #361/SANTA MONICA, CA 90403)

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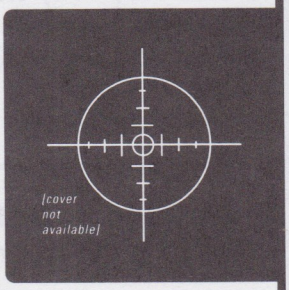
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Flipside R.A.F.R., vol. 2 " CD



R.A.F.R. stands for rock and fuckin' roll! They hit that fine mark more often than not on this 30-band CD, which contains a nice variety of styles and only a few really wounded tracks. Stand out bands that give you the most rock for your buck are the HUMPERS, ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN, the PLEASURE FUCKERS, the HELLACOPTERS, the ADZ, and DAMNATION. A good solid collection. (JC)

(R.A.F.R./11054 Ventura Blvd. #205/Studio City, CA 91604)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Forward To Death" CD



Twenty-three songs, one CD, all shit. Besides the fact that I really dislike pop-punk in general, I'm forced to confess that this disc reminded me of all the reasons why. In general it's filled with generic RAMONES-y, barely rockin', rip-off material. Some people claim that the BEATLES ruined rock 'n' roll because of all the crappy spin-off bands that followed in their wake. Unfortunately, Lookout continues to promote the continuing proliferation of third-rate, smiley-faced pop-"punk" bands that are polluting the record bins. Same old story, different tunes. (JW)

(Lookout/PO Box 11374/Berkeley, CA 94712)

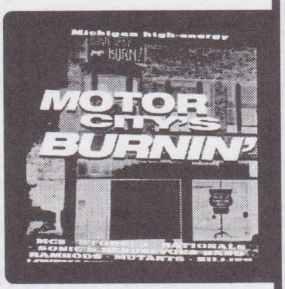
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Happy Meals Vol. 2: The Perfect Marriage"

On the second compilation from Joey Cape's My Records label, the emphasis seems to be on pop-punk and pop-slightly-less-than punk. 'Ol Joe seems to enjoy putting out bands that appeal to the dorky side of human nature, eg, Nerf Herder. Not that it's necessarily a bad thing in my book...for example, the song "Pantera Fans In Love" by TEN SPEED SUMMER totally takes me back to my days as an El Camino-drivin', SLAYER-listenin' Sacto Metal Kid. Oh yeah, NOFX covers BRACKET, ME FIRST AND THE GIMME GIMMES cover HALL & OATES, LAGWAGON cover themselves and LIMP's "Clear Color" appears on a comp for what must be at least the thirty-fifth time. Bonus points for the oh-so-suave cover pic of Floyd. (DGJ)



(My Records/PO Box 170280/San Francisco/CA 94117)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Motor City's Burnin' [vol. 1]" CD



A decidedly mixed bag of "high-energy" Michigan rock from the late 60s to the present. In theory that sounds promising, since that particular state has produced so many great bands, but the selection of material is not always stellar. Alongside fetching tracks by the MC5, the STOOGES, SONIC'S RENDEZVOUS, BOOTSEY X, the RAMRODS (an awesome song), the SILLIES, the MUTANTS, and the DIRTYS, one finds boring soul-influenced rock (the RATIONALS), boring blues rock (the UP and UPRISING), boring funk rock (BIG CHIEF), boring jazz-blues rock (JOHN SINCLAIR & WAYNE KRAMER), and boring metal-tinged rock (MOTOR DOLLS). Did I say that the RAMRODS ruled? (JB)

(Total Energy/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

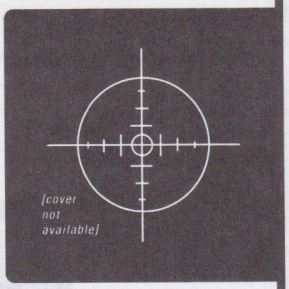
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"No Band Photo" double 7" EP



Four bands—the FRATELLIS, SPODIE, the PROMS and RUTH'S HAT—display their pop-punk wares on this EP, mostly in the QUEERS/SCREECHING WEASEL style. All of these tracks are solid, though most are not that memorable. The standout tracks are SPODIE's "Brenda's Got a Devilock" and RUTH'S HAT's "She Didn't Leave", and it comes with the fine packaging and colored vinyl we've come to expect from Mutant Pop. (JC)

(Mutant Pop/5010 N.W. Shasta/Corvalis, OR 97330)

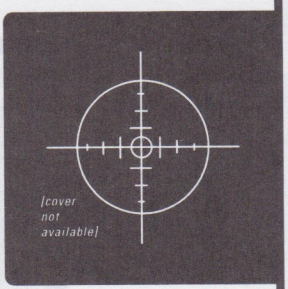
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"No More Heroes: A Tribute To The Stranglers" CD



Tribute records are always a hit and miss affair. Fortunately for most of those involved, the STRANGLERS wrote such strong songs that they shine through, despite some of the dire renditions here offered. There are some gems. WAT TYLER never fail to excel, and the INDEPENDENTS add a nice little ska update to "Golden Brown." If you are a fan of THE STRANGLERS, or of the (mostly) street-punk bands featured here (including US CHAOS, the REDUCERS, the WRETCHED ONES, et al), you won't be disappointed. Otherwise, stick to the originals. (RK)

(Elevator Music/PO Box 1502/New Haven, CT 06505)

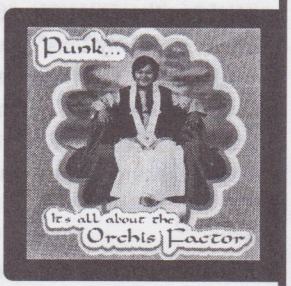
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Pop on Top" CD



A fetching 90's power pop comp featuring 20 bands from "down under". What distinguishes them somewhat from their US and UK predecessors is the Aussie penchant for heavier-than-normal guitars. Here one can find quality tracks by D.M. 3, ROLLERCOASTER, EPSTEIN, the PYRAMIDIACS, WELCOME MAT, and especially the CHEVELLES (whose "She's Not Around" is as good a power pop song as I've ever heard) alongside more pedestrian, wimpier, or college radio-oriented tracks. Overall, a pop lover's cornucopia. (JB)

(Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

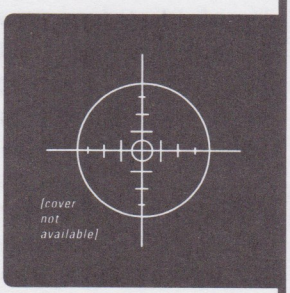
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Punk...It's All About the Orchis Factor" CD



From the folks at Suburban Home comes this lovely orange-packaged disc that looks vaguely like propaganda from those nice-but-slightly-scary Ananda Yoga people. Fortunately, it's not a Krishnacore comp, but rather a pretty decent collection of pop punk bands from around the country, ranging from the obscure (SMARTBOMB) to the supernova (BLINK 182, with an alternate version of "Enthused" from their smash "Dude Ranch" LP). Reccomended reasons for buying this comp: DISCOUNT, DIGGER, the MCRACKINS, and GOB. The rest of the stuff on here is pretty much up to snuff as well. A nice combination of the well-known and the unknown. (DGJ)

(Suburban Home/1750 30th Street #365/Boulder, CO 80301)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Rare 60's Beat Treasures, vol. 2" CD



A mixed bag of 60's beat songs, ranging from hard-edged Freakbeat stompers like the CRAIG's "I Must Be Mad" to softer Mersey-style beat like the MARAUDERS' "That's What I Want" to soul-oriented R&B like the MOODY BLUES' "People Gotta Go". My personal faves are the aforementioned CRAIG song; the BEAT MERCHANTS' pounding "Pretty Face"; the STYLOS' "Bye Bye Baby Bye Bye", which sounds like the PRETTY THINGS; FOUR JUST MEN's uptempo, hook-laden "Things Will Never Be the Same"; the BLACKWELLS' plaintive "All I Want is Your Love"; and the psychobilly-like "Movin' In" by the RIVER MEN. Most of it is on the heavier side, but the songs—covers and originals—are often overly derivative and formulaic. (JB)

(Gone Beat, no address)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"The Roots of Power Pop" CD



This great compilation of old Bomp 45s and previously unreleased tracks is misleadingly titled. Although one can find classic examples of "power pop" on it (by the PLIMSOULS, 20/20, and the ROMANTICS), it also contains fine exemplars of pop punk (the ZEROS), pure pop (the SHOES), 60's garage-style pop (the BARRACUDAS and the PANDORAS), and straight rock 'n' roll (the FLAMIN' GROOVIES and the REAL KIDS). Nor does it really showcase the "roots" of power pop, which predate the music here. But regardless of what you call it, this CD is chock full of pop-oriented wonders from Bomp. (JB)

(Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Scene Killer" CD

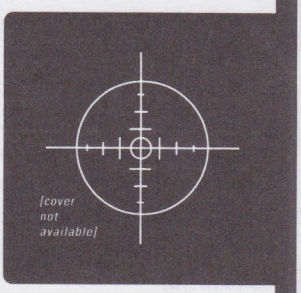


Outsider Records brings you a pretty damn good comp featuring the BUSINESS, the DUCKY BOYS, PRESSURE POINT, the BODIES, J.F.A., 999, the RANDUMBS, the FORGOTTEN, UNITED BLOOD, and heaps more. In all 26 bands give us a taste of what they're all about. Everyone knows how the more famous bands on here sound, but some of the lesser-known outfits also kick ass. Get this record. (IR)

(Outsider/PO Box 92708/Long Beach, CA 90809)

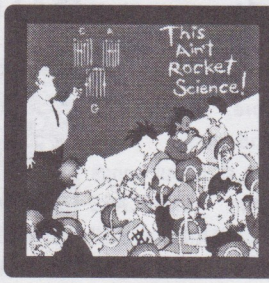
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Sixties Japanese Garage/Psych Rareties, vol. 1" CD

A misnamed comp which contains mainly wimpy Japanese pop songs and goofy soul covers. There are a few genuinely cool songs here, such as OUT CAST's uptempo, fuzzed-out "Let's Go On the Beach", which boasts an irresistable chorus; the TOYS' "Omiyasan", which has some rockin' punch and feature lots of quasi-psychedelic guitar picking; and DAY & NIGHT's catchy pop ditty. The NAPOLEON's "Aitai Aitai" exemplifies the frustrating, schizophrenic nature of this entire record, with its garagey fuzz guitar intro and climax separated by a long, slow croon. (JB)



(Baidi, no address)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"This Ain't Rocket Science"



Primarily a 7" label, Cheetah's Records ventures forth into the digital domain with this compilation. Some of the songs appear on Cheetah's 7"'s, such as those from the RECEIVERS, UNITED BLOOD, SPECIAL FORCES, and Andrew Champion's ill-fated post-SCREW 32 project, END OF THE WORLD. This also includes a demo version of a track from the upcoming TILT LP, the best track from GOB's new album, and the straight-up rocking "TV Nation" from NOTHING COOL's latest. But the real reason to buy this record is one thing and one thing only: PHOENIX IRONWORKS' "The Sex Pistols are God," a brilliant country-punk rumination on the importance of buying records über alles—even paying the rent should take a back seat to your music collection. (DGJ)

(Cheetah's/PO Box 4442/Berkeley, CA 94804)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Surfbeat behind the Iron Curtain [vol. 1]" CD



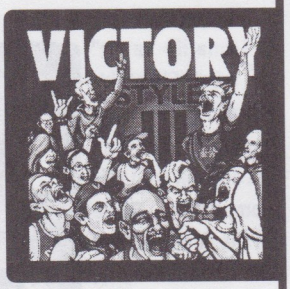
Here's an LP for the historical archives. It contains surf and beat instrumentals, the bulk of which were recorded in communist eastern Europe between 1963 and

SHITLIST

fairly pedestrian, although we can scarcely imagine the difficulties they faced getting permission to record anything in the face of state scrutiny and hostility. The only things that really stood out were the amazing guitar playing by Takeshi Terauchi in the song by Japan's BUNNYS and the British ELIMINATORS' fuzzed out version of "Wipe Out", neither of which were from behind the Iron Curtain! (JB)

(AIP/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

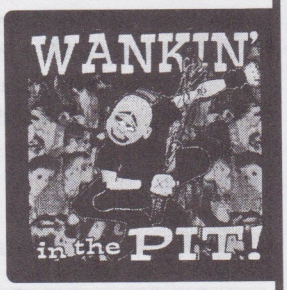
VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Victory Style III" LP/CD



2o tracks culled from their increasingly eclectic stable of hardcore, metal, ska, and punk. There are standout songs from SNAPCASE and STRIFE, as well as a classic BAD BRAINS track. (JP)

(Victory/PO Box 146546/Chicago, IL 60614)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Wankin' In The Pit" CD



A domestic release of a Japanese compilation. It consists in its entirety of Fat and Honest Don's label bands (the MAD CADDIES, the TEEN IDOLS, STRUNG OUT, LIMP, CHIXDIGGIT, SNUFF and NOFX) and Japanese bands (SREAD, FAT RANDY, POTSHOT, TROPICAL GUERILLA et al), who all sound like they should be on Fat. As far as I can tell, some of the tracks are unreleased, and it's certainly an excellent way of checking out a bunch of new Japanese melodic hardcore and pop bands. (RK)

(Suburban Home/1750 30th Street #365/Boulder, CO 80301)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Ya Gotta have Moxie" double CD



The good: 53 songs, two CD's worth of 6o's garage bands (and I mean real garage bands, ya know, before every dumb ass reviewer started giving every record the garage title. The bad: as with any comp—and especially one with 53 fuckin' songs—there are bound to be some losers, and there are. The ugly: if you're a 6o's music kind of guy or gal, you'll dig this. (GL)

(Bomp/PO Box 7112/Burbank, CA 91510)

VARIOUS ARTISTS
"Year of the Rat" CD



Whatever you think of LESS THAN JAKE, one good thing that can be said of them is that they haven't gone the route of putting out a roster full of Lesser Than Jakes. This comp is fairly diverse, although it generally leans toward the pop/ska/emo side of things. It also fucking rocks. From ANN BERETTA's driving, roughly impassioned "Bottle Caps" to DISCOUNT's Billy Bragg cover to what's possibly the best track on the record, ANIMAL CHIN's "Seven," this is a strong record from start of finish. Throw in SARGE's propulsively lilting "Beguiling" and the venerable J CHURCH, and this comp is a definite must-have for dorks. (DGJ)

(Fueled By Ramen/PO Box 12563/Gainesville, FL 32604)

VINDICTIVES
"Party Time For Assholes"



Okay, so anybody remotely familiar with the VINDICTIVES knows that Joey loves his covers. First they cover a RAMONES record, now comes "Party Time For Assholes," an album full of their favorite songs both well-known and obscure. If you like the band, you'll love this record. The greatest cover LP ever made award has to go to ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES (with METALLICA's "Garage Inc." a close second), but "Party Time" is a worthy addition to what suddenly seems to be a fairly crowded genre. By the way, the fretboard-tapping on the version of LOUIS ARMSTRONG's "What a Wonderful World" was a truly brilliant touch. (DGJ)

(Liberation/PO Box 17746/Anaheim, CA 92817)

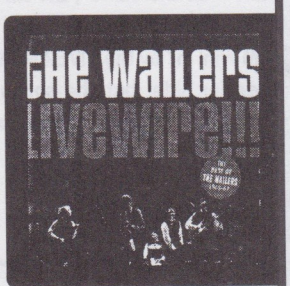
VODKA COLLINS
"Tokyo New York" CD



Man's Ruin has unearthed a great lost treasure from the glam rock era. It's time to break out the high heels and CHUCK BERRY guitar riffs. Originally released in 1973, VODKA COLLINS were the bastard brainchild of two rock 'n' roll-crazed session musicians. One was an American, Alan Merrill, whose biggest claim to fame was writing "I Love Rock and Roll" with JOAN JETT. One was Japanese, Hiroshi Ohguchi, a glam super-scenester who went on to find much fame and fortune in Japanese films and TV. The lyrics are in both langueges, and include great titles (such as "Diamonds and Dungerees", "Terminal City", and "Pontiac Pan") which borrow from T-REX, BOWIE, and MOTT THE HOOPLE for their flavor. Great stuff. (JC)

(Man's Ruin/610 22nd Street #302/San Francisco, CA 94107)

WAILERS
"Livewired!" LP



"Livewired!" is a "best of" compilation of the WAILERS, documenting their releases from 1965-1967. Excellent garage-rock 'n' roll classics such as "Dirty Robber", "Out Of Our Tree", and "I'm Down" make their way onto this great record. It isn't necessarily stuff you haven't heard before, but it

ANTI-FLAG

"A New Kind Of Army"



Anti-Flag does not mean Anti-American. Anti-Flag means anti-war. Anti-Flag means unity.

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In stores April '99 on CD and LP

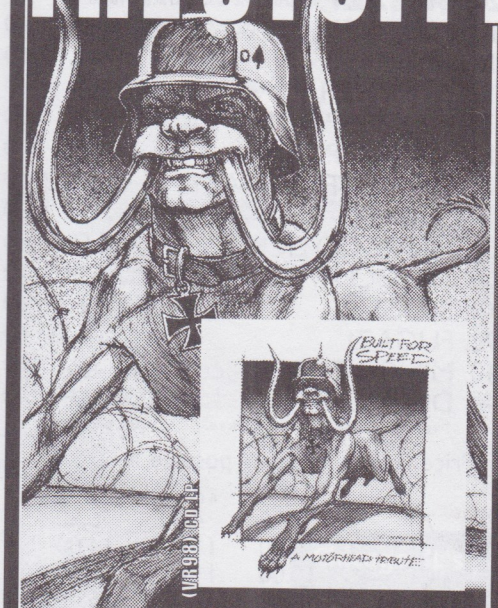
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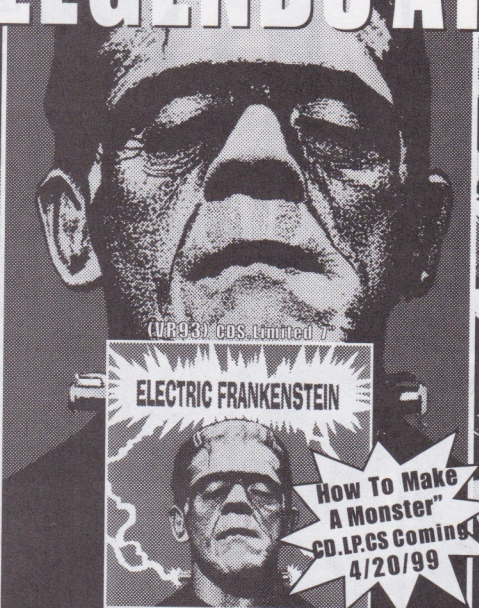
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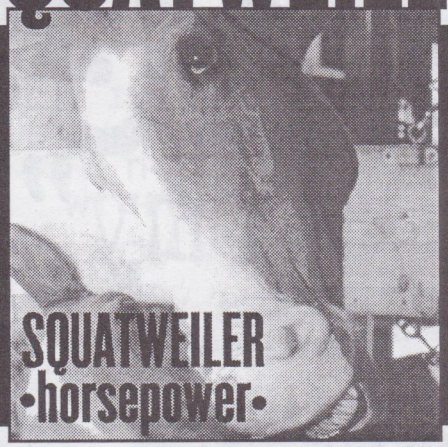
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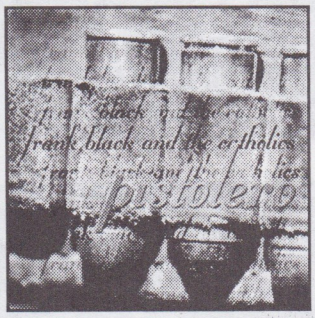
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frank black and the catholics pistolero

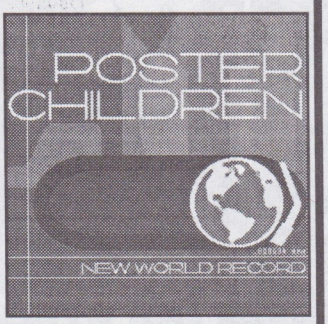
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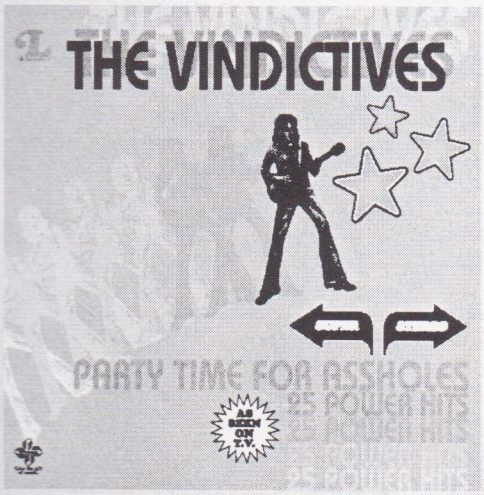
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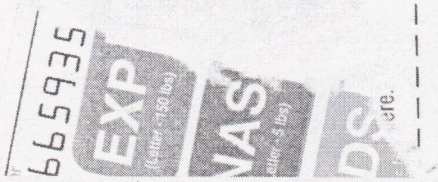




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"Party Time for Assholes" 2xLP/CD

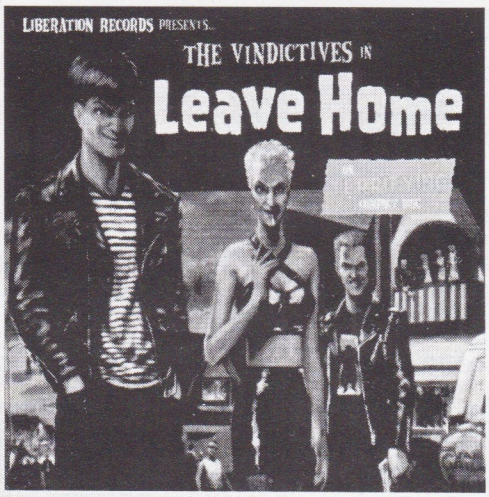
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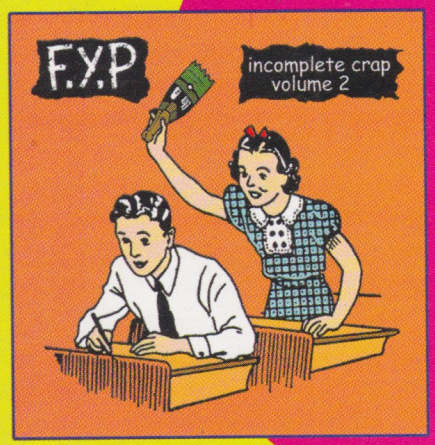
Chicago, IL's punk rock masters cover the entire RAMONES "Leave Home" album.



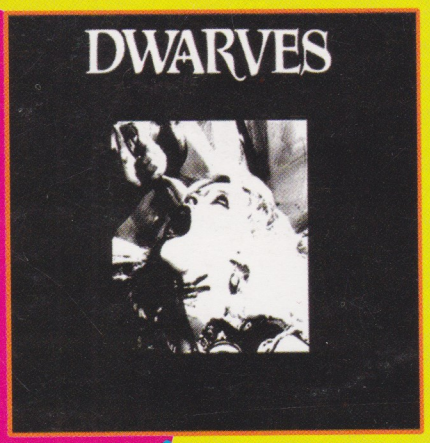
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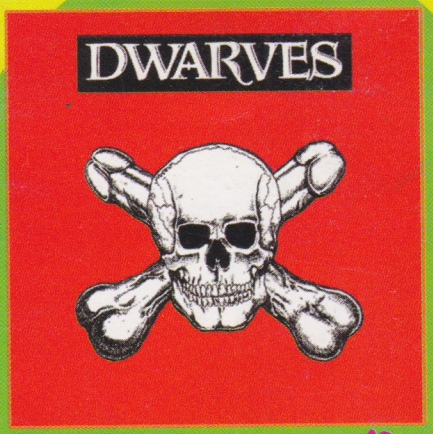
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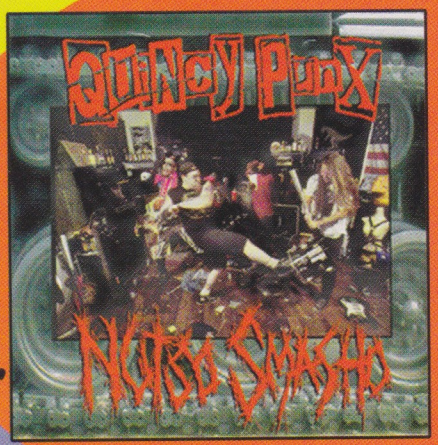


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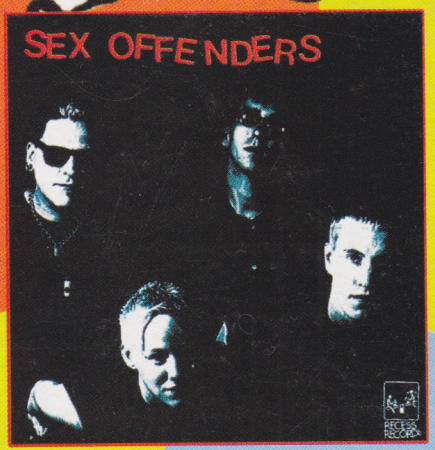




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